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Macduff, John R. 1818-1895.
The morning watches, and
Night watches

Mrs. A. Rondfield

With the affectionate

regards of her friend

E. P. S. Jones

Dec. 20th 1859

THE

MORNING WATCHES

AND

NIGHT WATCHES.

Macduff -

BY

THE AUTHOR OF "THE FAITHFUL PROMISER."

NEW YORK:
ROBERT CARTER & BROTHERS,
No. 285 BROADWAY.

1853.

T. B. SMITH, STEREOTYPER,
216 William Street, New York.

R. CRAIGHEAD, PRINTER,
53 Vesey Street.

THE

MORNING WATCHES.

"Come near, and bless us when we wake,
Ere through the world our way we take;
Till, in the ocean of Thy love,
We lose ourselves in heaven above!"

"My Soul

Waiteth for the LORD

More

Than they that Watch for

The

MORNING!"

Ps. cxxx. 6.

THE MORNING WATCHES.

This little volume is designed to form, by the Divine blessing, an humble auxiliary in promoting what is pronounced in the best of all manuals of devotion to be "a good thing"—the showing forth of God's "loving-kindness *in the morning*," and His "faithfulness *every night*"—(Ps. xcii. 2).

It may not be out of place to remark, regarding the verse which forms the key-note to each petition —"O Lord, in the morning will I direct my prayer unto Thee"—that the word "direct," in the original Hebrew, may literally be rendered, "set in order." It refers to the setting in order of the wood for the burnt-sacrifices in the temple of old. While the heart of the believer, according to this beautiful allusion, is represented as a spiritual altar, on which, morning after morning, he offers the oblation of prayer, this motto-verse may also serve as a magnet

to keep the eye fixed, in each successive petition, on the great Antitypical Sacrifice, through whom alone it is that "the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts" are "acceptable" in the sight of God.

Though more strictly designed for private devotion, and therefore expressed in the first person, it is hoped, by the substitution of the plural pronoun, that the following pages may not be inappropriate for the family altar.

DECEMBER 25, 1851.

First Morning.

FOR PARDON OF SIN.

"For Thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great."—Ps. xxv. 11.

O God, I bless Thee that Thou hast permitted me to lie down in sleep, and to awake this morning in safety. Thou hast dispersed the darkness of another night: may no shadow of sin obscure the sunshine of Thy favor and love. May the returning light of day be to me the type and emblem of that better radiance with which Thou visitest the souls of Thy people, when they are enabled, in Jesus, to behold a pardoning God seated on a throne of reconciliation and grace.

I come to Thee, acknowledging my transgressions in all their heinousness. I have nothing to plead in extenuation. Warnings

have been abused, providences slighted, grace resisted, Thy Spirit grieved. It is of the Lord's mercies I am not consumed—that Thou hast not long ere now consigned me, with all this load of unpardoned guilt, to that place where pardon is unknown.

But I do rejoice to know that "there is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared"—that I can bring my great sins to a great Saviour. May I be enabled to feel that this all-glorious *name* of a reconciled God in Christ is "a strong tower," into which I may "run and be safe." Give me grace, in self-renouncing lowliness, to disown every other ground of confidence or hope of mercy, and to cast myself, a broken-hearted, humbled penitent, at the feet of Him on whom was laid the burden of all my transgressions. May mine henceforth be the blessedness of those "whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered." May life's joys be sweetened, and life's sorrows sanctified, and life's terminating hour gladdened, with the as-

surance, "I am at peace with my God." May Thy favor brighten every scene, and the sweet sense of Thy reconciling love be interfused with all my occupations. If sorrow should cloud or darken, may I be brought to feel that there can be no true sorrow or disquietude to the soul which has found its rest in the finished work of Jesus, and which has attained that blessed peace here which is the prelude of glory hereafter.

Give me grace to walk more closely with Thee in the time to come. Being forgiven much, may I love Thee all the more. May my life be one habitual effort of self and sin crucifixion, seeking to consecrate my soul's best energies to Him who is willing to "blot out as a thick cloud" all my transgressions. Overrule the discipline of Thy providence for promoting within me this death of sin, and this life of righteousness. Amid earth's manifold disquietudes, its crosses and its losses, enable me with joy to look forward to that blessed hour when there shall be no more sin,

and therefore no more sorrow—when every tear shall be wiped from every eye, and when I shall be permitted to know all that is comprehended in the holy beatitude, how "blessed" indeed are "the pure in heart," who are to "*see* God."

Direct, control, suggest, this day, all my designs, and thoughts, and actions, that every power of my body, and every faculty of my mind, may unite in devotedness to Thy sole service and glory. And all I ask is for Jesus' sake. Amen.

"CAUSE ME TO HEAR THY LOVING-KINDNESS IN THE MORNING, FOR IN THEE DO I TRUST."

Second Morning.

FOR RENEWAL OF HEART.

"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me."—Ps. li. 10.

Almighty God, who hast mercifully preserved me during the unconscious hours of slumber, I desire to dedicate my waking moments and thoughts to Thee. Do Thou preoccupy my mind with hallowed and heavenly things. May I be enabled throughout this day, by the help of Thy Holy Spirit, to exclude all that is vain, and frivolous, and sinful, and to have my affections centred on Thee, as my best portion and chiefest joy. As Thy Spirit of old did brood over the face of the waters, may that same blessed Spirit descend in all the plenitude of His heavenly graces, that the gloom of a deeper moral

chaos may be dispersed, and that mine may be the beauty and happiness and gladness of a soul that has been transformed "from darkness to light, and from the power of sin and Satan unto God."

Forbid, blessed Lord! that I should be resting in anything short of this new creation. May my old nature be crucified; and, as one alive from the dead, may I "walk with Jesus in newness of life." May the new life infused by Thy Spirit urge me to higher attainments and more heavenly aspirations. May I be enabled to see the world in its true light —its pleasures fading, its hopes delusive, its friendships perishable. May I be more solemnly and habitually impressed by the surpassing magnitude of "the things not seen." May I give evidence of the reality of a renewal of heart by a more entire and consistent dedication of the life. May my soul become a temple of the Holy Ghost; may "Holiness to the Lord" be its superscription. May I be led to feel that there can be no true

joy but what emanates from Thyself, the fountain and fulness of all joy—the God in whom "all my well-springs" are.

Whatever may be the discipline Thou art employing for this inward heart-transformation, let me be willing to submit to it. Let me lie passive in the arms of Thy mercy, saying, "Undertake Thou for me." May it be mine to bear all, and endure all, and rejoice in all—adoring a Father's hand, and trusting a Father's faithfulness—feeling secure in a Father's tried love.

Blessed Jesus! anew would I wash in the opened Fountain. The new heart, like every holy blessing I can ask, is the purchase of that blood which Thou didst so freely shed. May it be sprinkled on my guilty conscience. May I know ever what it is to be living on a living Saviour, bringing all-emptiness to all-fulness—the unworthiness of infinite demerit to the worthiness of all-sufficient, all-abounding, grace and mercy.

Do Thou shine upon my ways. May I this

day get nearer heaven. May I feel at its close that I have done something for God—something to promote the great end for which existence was given me—the glory of Thy holy name. Bless all my beloved friends. Unite us together in bonds of holy fellowship here; and at last, in Thy presence, may we be permitted to drink together of the streams of everlasting love. And all I ask is for Jesus' sake. Amen.

"CAUSE ME TO HEAR THY LOVING-KINDNESS IN THE MORNING, FOR IN THEE DO I TRUST."

Third Morning.

FOR SANCTIFYING GRACE.

"I am the Lord that doth sanctify you."—Exod. xxxi. 13.

Most blessed God, Thou hast permitted me in Thy great goodness to see the light of another day. May I be enabled to receive every returning morning as a fresh token of Thy love—a renewal of my lease of existence—a fresh grant of mercy from the Author of all being. May I seek, this day, and every day, to consecrate the life spared by Thy bounty more and more to Thy praise.

Lord, I come anew with my burden of sin. It is Thy marvellous forbearance that does not make every succeeding morning my last. I bless Thee that there is still the cleansing blood, the "Wonderful Counsellor," the all-

gracious Spirit. Give me to know, ere I go forth into the world, what it is to have the sense of Thy reconciled love. Whether in public or in private, in the intercourse of life or in the seclusion of solitude, may I realize Thy presence. May it be to me the sweetest and most blessed of all thoughts, that a covenant God is "compassing my path"—that by Him I am defended, guided, supported—*safe!*

Heavenly Father, it is the unholiness of my heart which mars the joys of my communion with Thee. It is my especial prayer that Thou mayest impart largely to me of the sanctifying influences of Thy grace and Spirit. Let sin be crucified more and more. Let self be subjugated more and more. Under the transforming power of new affections, may God become all in all. May it be mine to know, in growing experience, the happiness of true holiness. May I jealously avoid all that is likely to estrange me from Thee, and zealously cultivate all that is calculated to

draw me nearer towards Thee. "Thy favor is life"—O show me that to lose Thy favor is death indeed!

This blessed work of inward sanctification is Thine. Alas! I feel my constant proneness to wander from Thee, and to seek my happiness in the perishable. My best resolutions, how frail! my warmest affections, how languid and lukewarm! my holiest moments, how distracted with vain thoughts and worldly cares!—my whole life, how stained with sin! But do Thou strengthen me with all might, by Thy Spirit, in the inner man. My daily cry would be, "More grace! more grace!" There is no sufficiency in myself; but hast Thou not promised to make Thy grace sufficient? May I make it my grand ambition to be marking, day by day, my Zionward progress—my growing conformity to the holy character of a holy God.

For this end, overrule all the dispensations of Thy providence. May I hear a voice in each of them proclaiming, "Be holy." May

I be led to bear them all, and to rejoice in them all, if they thus be the means of bringing me nearer Thyself.

I commend to Thy fatherly protection all my beloved friends, and all for whom I ought to pray. "Sanctify them through Thy truth." May they all be presented unblamable before Thee in the day of Christ's appearing.

And may the grace of the Lord Jesus and the love of God, and the communion and fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with me now and ever. Amen.

"CAUSE ME TO HEAR THY LOVING-KINDNESS IN THE MORNING, FOR IN THEE DO I TRUST."

Fourth Morning.

FOR SUPPORT IN TEMPTATION.

"Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe."—Ps. cxix. 117.

Most gracious God, give me grace to begin a new morning with Thee. Ere entering on the world, I invoke Thy blessing. Before I hear the voice of earthly friend, or mingle in earthly society, may I have a conscious filial nearness to Thee, my Father in heaven. O Thou better, tenderer, dearer than all on earth, give me the sweet assurance of Thy presence and favor. With this, all the day's joys will be joys indeed—with this, the sting will be extracted from the day's sorrows. In quiet confidence I will repose on Thy covenant faithfulness. I need no other benediction, Lord, if I have *Thine*. Other portions

may fail me, but I am independent of all, if "Thou art the strength of my heart, and my portion forever."

I adore and bless Thy holy name for every past token of Thy kindness and forbearance. The retrospect of life is a retrospect of love. I am a wonder to myself that Thou hast spared me—that mercy is remembered when nothing but wrath is deserved. "Unless the Lord had been my help, my soul had long ere now dwelt in silence."

On that same arm I would desire still to lean. I am compassed about with a great fight of afflictions, and the sorest and saddest of all are my sins. But I fly to Thee, thou helper of the helpless. Give me to know what it is to dismiss all my own guilty misgivings, and to rest my simple faith on a tried Redeemer. It is mistrust of Him that has been the cause of many a bygone fall. I have been dwelling more on the strength of my temptations than on the strength of my Saviour. O "hold *Thou* me up, blessed Je-

sus! and I *shall* be safe." Whenever in the way of sin, give me to realize the all-sufficiency of Thy grace. May every hurricane of temptation drive me more under the shelter of the Rock. May the loss of every earthly prop lead me to Thyself—the only abiding refuge. No step in the wilderness-journey would I take without Thee. No loss would I mourn when sustained at Thy bidding. No enemy would I fear if Thou art on my side. Hold *Thou* me up, and then indeed I shall be safe—safe for time—safe for eternity.

And the same support I ask for myself, I beseech Thee to vouchsafe to all near and dear to me. May the Lord God be their "sun and shield." May they experience no temptation "above what they are able to bear;" or, with the temptation, grant them grace that they may be able to bear it. And when all earthly dangers, and toils, and trials are over, may we all be enabled to meet in glory, and trace there, with adoring gratitude

and joy, the way in which *Thy* mercy through life "has held us up."

Anew I commend myself, body and soul, to Thee this day. For Thy dear Son's sake, forgive all my sins. My sole trust is in the atoning blood. May I feel this to be the best preservative against temptation and sin, that all I am, and all I have, is not my own, but belongs to the Lord who died for me. Hear these my unworthy supplications, and grant me an answer in peace, for His sake. Amen.

"CAUSE ME TO HEAR THY LOVING-KINDNESS IN THE MORNING, FOR IN THEE DO I TRUST."

Fifth Morning.

FOR HELP IN TROUBLE.

"Though I walk in the midst of trouble, Thou wilt revive me."—Ps. cxxxviii. 7.

Most blessed Lord, who hast again permitted me to approach a throne of grace, do Thou this day shine into my heart. Anew may I enter on another day's duties and trials, with a soul calm and peaceful amid all other disquietudes, by being at peace with Thee.

I bless Thee that I can ever "sing of mercy" as well as of "judgment." Thy dealings might have been all in unmixed wrath, but the severest of them are tempered with gracious love. O that they may have their designed effect of driving me to the only true

rest for the soul, in the bosom of its God! May the breaking of cistern by cistern only endear to me the more the great Fountain-head.

How often dost Thou send tribulations, that Thy people may see more of Thy gracious hand! How often, when the waters are troubled, do we recognize the presence of the great Covenant-angel himself, and experience the plenitude of His upholding grace and mercy! Lord, my earnest prayer is, that every trial may serve to unfold to me more of the preciousness of Jesus. As prop by prop, which was wont to support me on earth, may be giving way, may I know what it is to lean my whole weight *upon* Him, and leave my whole case *with* Him, repairing to Him as the friend that "sticketh closer than any brother"—into His sympathizing bosom to confide my every want—from His inexhaustible treasury to draw every consolation—and on His upholding arm confidingly and habitually to rest.

What, O blessed Saviour, are my troubles to Thine! What are my bitterest tears and most aching heart in comparison with what Thou didst so freely endure for me! May the remembrance of this *Thy* fellowship in *my* suffering, and *my* fellowship in *Thine*, reconcile me patiently to endure whatsoever Thou seest meet to lay upon me. Give me grace ever to see that my bitterest trial is my sin, that my heaviest cross is the cross of my wandering treacherous heart. When I think of that blessed time when God shall terminate the tears of a weeping world, may this be my loftiest ground of rejoicing—that there will be then no more sin to cause them.

Humbly I would lie at my Saviour's feet, disowning all trust save in Him—exulting in His finished work, and meritorious righteousness, and all-prevalent intercession. I rejoice to think of the redeemed multitude before His throne, "whom no man can number," and to feel that His ability and willingness "to save unto the uttermost" are still the same.

Command, O Lord, thy richest blessing this day on all whom I love. May all my relatives be related to Thee in the common bonds of the gospel. Though separated by distance from each other on life's highway, may we enjoy the consolation that we are all treading the same invisible road Zionward—that earth's dearest and tenderest ties will, at the end of the chequered journey, be strengthened and perpetuated in the full vision and fruition of Thee our God.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus, and the love of God, and the fellowship and communion of the Holy Ghost, be with me this day and ever. Amen.

"CAUSE ME TO HEAR THY LOVING-KINDNESS IN THE MORNING, FOR IN THEE DO I TRUST."

Sixth Morning.

FOR COMFORT IN BEREAVEMENT.

"Turn Thee unto me, and have mercy upon me, for I am desolate and afflicted."—Ps. xxv. 16.

O God, I come to Thee this morning, rejoicing in the simple but sublime assurance that "the Lord reigneth." Thy judgments are often "a great deep." May it be mine ever to own Thy sovereignty, and to rest satisfied with the assurance, "He hath done all things well."

It is indeed my comfort to know that "my times" are not in my own hands, but in Thine. When in vain I seek to explain the mystery of Thy inscrutable doings, may I be enabled implicitly to trust Thine unswerving rectitude and faithfulness. The kindest and best of earthly parents may err—they may be be-

trayed into unnecessary harshness and severity—but Thou, O unerring Parent, wilt not, and canst not inflict one unneeded stroke. I can own Thy wisdom where I cannot discern it. I can trust the footsteps of love where I cannot trace them.

I look back with adoring wonder on all Thy marvellous dealings towards me in the past. "When my foot slipped, Thy mercy, O Lord, held me up." How many tear-drops have been dried by Thee! How many sorrows have been soothed by Thee! How many dangers have been averted by Thee! Instead of wondering at my trials, I have rather reason to marvel at Thy forbearance. What are my heaviest afflictions in comparison with the deserts of sin? Lord, if they had been in proportion to my guilt, I could not have had one hour of joy.

Give me grace not only to bear all, and to endure all, but to glory in all which Thy chastening love sees meet to appoint. Affliction is Thine own appointed training-school

for immortality. If I need such training, Lord, withhold it not. Rather subject me to the severest ordeal of fatherly discipline, than leave me to vex Thee more with my guilty departures and backsliding. I will confide in the tenderness of Thy dealings—that Thou wilt conduct me by no rougher path than is really needful. Thou hast given Thy Son for me! After *such* a pledge of Thy love, may it never be mine to breathe one murmuring word.

For all in sorrow, Lord, I pray that they may take their sorrows to the "Man of sorrows." May they be willing to forget their own light afflictions as they behold His bleeding wounds. Blessed God, what a source of joy to the whole family of the afflicted, that the exalted Head and elder brother has Himself tasted sorrow's bitterest cup! Lord Jesus, Thou who hast suffered so much for me, grant that by patience and unrepining submission I may be enabled to "glorify thee in the fires."

All my beloved friends I commit to Thy care. May the Lord be their everlasting portion. Forbid that I should have to mourn in them what would be bitterer than the pang of all earthly bereavement—that they are bereft of Thy favor. Make them Thine, and in the midst of life's vicissitudes and changes, may we all look forward to that better time, and that better world, where sorrow and sighing shall forever flee away. And all I ask is for Jesus' sake. Amen.

"CAUSE ME TO HEAR THY LOVING-KINDNESS IN THE MORNING, FOR IN THEE DO I TRUST."

Seventh Morning.

FOR LIGHT IN DARKNESS.

"Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness."
—Ps. cxii. 4.

Eternal, everlasting God, I bless Thee for the privilege of access into Thy presence. What am I—a guilty, unworthy sinner, deserving only of condemnation—that I should be permitted, with holy boldness, to approach the footstool of Thy throne, and call Thee "my Father in heaven!"

I rejoice to know, when "my heart is overwhelmed, and in perplexity," that I can ever look unto Thee as a "Rock that is higher than I"—that, amid all the ebbings and flowings in the tide of my own fitful frames and feelings, Thou, great Rock of ages, remainest fixed and immovable. Thou hast never failed

me in the past. When "deep has been calling to deep," and many "waves and billows have gone over me," "the Lord has commanded His loving-kindness in the day-time, and in the night His song has been with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life." And I will trust Thee in the future. In the midst of baffling and mysterious providences I will be still—hushing every murmur, and breathing in lowly resignation the prayer, "divinely taught," "Thy will be done."

It is my comfort to know that the darkest cloud is fringed with covenant love. I can repose on the blessed assurance that *present* discipline is *needed* discipline, and that all which is mystery now will be cleared up hereafter. May it be mine cheerfully to follow the footsteps of the guiding Shepherd through the darkest, loneliest road, and amidst thickening sorrows may I have grace to say, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."

Lord, increase my faith—let it rise above

all difficulties and all trials. Let these drive me closer to Him who has promised to make me "more than conqueror." Let them quicken my longings for the true home of my soul above. May it be my grand ambition here to be a "pilgrim" in everything —to be pitching my tent day by day nearer heaven, imbibing every day more of the pilgrim character, and longing more for the pilgrim's rest. May I be enabled to say, with an increasingly chastened spirit, of a passing world, "Here I have no continuing city." May this assurance dry all tears, and reconcile to all sorrows—"I am journeying unto the place of which the Lord hath said, I will give it you."

Blessed Jesus, hasten Thy coming and Thy kingdom. Scatter the darkness which is now covering heathen nations. Stand by Thy missionary servants. May they exercise a simple faith on Thine own sure word of promise. "Strong in the Lord and in the power of His might," may every mountain of diffi-

culty be made a plain, and "the glory of the Lord be revealed."

God of Bethel, I commend to Thee all my beloved friends. Shield them by Thy protecting providence. Give them every needed blessing in the present life, and in the world to come life everlasting. And all I ask is for Jesus' sake. Amen.

"CAUSE ME TO HEAR THY LOVING-KINDNESS IN THE MORNING, FOR IN THEE DO I TRUST."

Eighth Morning.

FOR HOPE IN DISCOURAGEMENT.

"Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God."—Ps. xliii. 5.

O God, in Thine infinite mercy Thou hast again spared me to approach Thy blessed presence. May each morning find me better prepared for the glorious waking-time of immortality, when "the day shall break," and earth's shadows shall forever "flee away." May I seek to rise this day in newness of life, breathing more of the atmosphere of holiness, and partaking more of the character of heaven.

Thou art ever, by the salutary dispensations of Thy providence, reminding me that "earth is not my rest." It is well, Lord,

that it should be so; that, by Thine own gracious and needed discipline, the world be disarmed of its insinuating power, and I be weaned from what is precarious at the best, and which ultimately *must* perish.

O my God, I feel heavily burdened by reason of sin. I mourn my guilty proneness to temptation. How anything and everything seems often enough to drive me from Thee, and to lead me to seek my happiness in created good, rather than in Thyself, the infinite fountain of all excellence! How sad have been my backslidings!—how have solemn vows been broken!—how have abandoned and forsworn sins threatened again to have dominion over me! How little tenderness of conscience has there been!—how little dread of an uneven walk! How often, on the heart which I have consecrated to Thee as an altar for the perpetual sacrifice of praise, and gratitude, and love, has there been burning incense to strange gods!

Lord, when I look to my inner self, I have

good cause indeed for misgivings and despondency. Conscience repeats, over and over again, a sentence of condemnation, and I have naught to extenuate my guilt or palliate my sin. Whither can I flee? Where can I look but to Thee, O Lamb of God, thou sin-bearing and sin-forgiving Saviour!

Enable me to be living more from moment to moment on Thy grace—to rely on thy guiding arm with more childlike confidence —to look with a more simple faith to Thy finished work, disowning all trust in my own doings, and casting myself, as a poor needy pensioner, on the bounty of Him who hath done all, and suffered all, and endured all, for me. Thus relying on the unseen arm of a covenant-God, when the hour of darkness and discouragement overtakes me—when trials multiply, and comforts fail, and streams of earthly blessing are dried up—may I have what compensates for the loss of all, "*Thy* favor, which is life, and Thy loving-kindness, which is better than life." "I will go in the

strength of the Lord God." "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in Him."

Be the God of all near and dear to me. May all my relatives be able to claim a spiritual relationship with Thee, that so those earthly bonds of attachment, which sooner or later must snap asunder here, may be renewed and perpetuated before the throne.

Compassionate all who are in sorrow. Comfort the feeble-minded. May "the joy of the Lord be their strength." May valuable lives be prolonged. May those appointed unto death be prepared for their great change. And all I ask is for Jesus' sake. Amen.

"CAUSE ME TO HEAR THY LOVING-KINDNESS IN THE MORNING, FOR IN THEE DO I TRUST."

Ninth Morning.

FOR WISDOM IN PERPLEXITY.

"Cause me to know the way wherein I should walk, for I lift up my soul unto Thee."—Ps. cxliii. 8.

O ETERNAL Lord, whose nature and whose name is love, I bless Thee that I am again invited into Thy presence. What am I, that I should be permitted to speak to the infinite God! I might have been left through eternity a monument of Thy righteous vengeance. I might have known Thee only as "the consuming fire." But "Thy ways are not as man's ways;" mercy is remembered when wrath might have come upon me to the uttermost.

I desire to begin this day, blessing and praising Thee for "Thine unspeakable gift," Jesus the Son of Thy love. Adored be Thy

name, that the guilt of my sin, which the holiness of Thy law could not suffer otherwise to be cancelled, has to Him been transferred—that, as the scape-goat of His people, He has borne the mighty load into the land of oblivion, never more to be remembered. May I be enabled to show forth my lively grattitude to Thee for this wondrous token of Thy love, not only by lip-homage, but by heart and life devotion. Sanctify and seal me in body, soul, and spirit; and present me at last "faultless before the presence of Thy glory with exceeding joy."

O my God, I rejoice to know that my interests for time and eternity are confided to Thy keeping. Though often "wonderful in counsel," Thou art ever "excellent in working." Thou art "God only wise"—"righteous in all Thy ways, and holy in all Thy works." I commit my way and my doings unto Thee. "Hold *Thou* me up, and I shall be safe." May I trust Thy wisdom and faithfulness, even amid crosses, and losses, and

frowning providences. Make them all work together for my good.

If my path be in any way now hedged up with thorns, "undertake Thou for me." "Guide me with Thy counsel." Let me take no step, and engage in no plan, unsanctioned by Thine approval. Let it be my grand aim and ambition, in all the changes of a changing life, to hear Thy directing voice, saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it;" and then shall all life's trials be sweetened, and life's burden lightened, by knowing that they are the appointment of infinite wisdom and unchanging love, and that, though man may err, God never can.

May Thy Holy Spirit lead me this day into all the truth. May all its duties be pervaded by the leavening power of vital godliness. While *in* the world, may I seek to feel and to exhibit that I am not *of* it. May I give evidence, in my walk and conversation, of a renewed nature, and of a nobler destiny. Hasten, blessed Jesus, Thy coming and Thy

kingdom. "How long shall the wicked triumph?" "Save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance; feed them also, and lift them up forever."

Let the voice of salvation be heard in the households of all I love. May theirs be the dwellings of the righteous. May this be their name, "The Lord is there." May they know Him who hath said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

And "now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in Thee." Hear and answer these unworthy supplications, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

"CAUSE ME TO HEAR THY LOVING-KINDNESS IN THE MORNING, FOR IN THEE DO I TRUST."

Tenth Morning.

FOR STRENGTH IN WEAKNESS.

My strength is made perfect in weakness."—2 Cor. xii. 9.

O thou high and mighty God, inhabiting eternity, do Thou draw near unto a poor unworthy sinner, who ventures anew this morning to approach the footstool of Thy throne. Vouchsafe me now the gracious aids of Thy gracious Spirit, that out of much weakness I may be made strong. It is Thine own gracious assurance, that "they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." I would rely on the faithfulness of a promising God. May my own utter emptiness drive me to all fulness. May my own conscious weakness wean me from all earthly props, and confidences, and refuges, to "abide under the shadow of the Almighty."

Lord, I confess this day with shame and confusion of face my manifold infirmities, my coldness and lukewarmness, my distrust of Thy providence, my insensibility to Thy love, my murmuring at Thy dealings, my tampering with sin, my resisting of Thy grace. How often, like the slender reed, have I bent before the blast of temptation, my best resolutions proving "as the morning cloud and early dew!"

And yet, gracious Father, Thou hast not broken "the bruised reed"—Thou hast not "quenched the smoking flax." I am here this morning a marvel to myself that Thou art still sparing me. "Thy ways are not as man's ways." Had it been so, Thou wouldst long since have grown weary. But it is the prerogative of the everlasting God that "*He* fainteth not, neither is weary." Thou art this morning giving me fresh grants of mercy, renewed proofs and tokens of unmerited love. I am receiving "at the Lord's hand double for all my sins."

I rejoice to know, blessed Jesus, that it is Thy burdened ones Thou hast specially promised "gently to lead." Thou wilt conduct me by no rougher road than is necessary. "Undertake Thou for me." May the wilderness journey be this day resumed and renewed with a more simple, and childlike, and habitual leaning on Thee. Do Thou put this new song into my mouth, "The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust." Say unto me, in the midst of my weakness, "Fear not, thou worm Jacob." With the pillar of Thy presence ever before me, "I will go from strength to strength."

Keep me this day from sin. May no evil thoughts, or vain imaginings, or deceitful lusts, obtrude on my walk with God. May an affecting sense of how frail I am, keep me near the atoning sacrifice. May the "horns of the altar" ever be in sight. Blessed Jesus, my helpless soul would hang every moment upon Thee.

Look down in Thy kindness on all connected with me by ties of earthly kindred. May the blessing of the God of Bethel rest on every heart and household I love. May we all be journeying Zionwards, and be so weaned from earth as to feel that Zionwards is homewards. If pursuing different paths, and separated, it may be, far from one another, may the journey have one blessed and happy termination. May we meet in glory, and meet with Thee. And all I ask is for the Redeemer's sake. Amen.

"CAUSE ME TO HEAR THY LOVING-KINDNESS IN THE MORNING, FOR IN THEE DO I TRUST."

Eleventh Morning.

FOR GRATITUDE FOR MERCIES.

"What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits towards me?"—Ps. cxvi. 12.

O God, I adore Thee as the Author and Giver of every good and every perfect gift. Thou art daily loading me with Thy benefits. Every returning morning brings with it fresh causes for gratitude—new material for praise. I bless Thee for Thy temporal bounties—"how great has been the sum of them!" While others have been pining in poverty, or wasted by sickness, or racked in pain, or left friendless and portionless, Thou hast been making showers of blessing to fall around my dwelling. I laid me down last night and slept—I awaked, for the Lord sustained me. I might never have seen the morning light.

Mine might have been the midnight summons to meet a God in whose righteous presence I was all unmeet and unprepared to stand. And yet I am again spared a monument of Thy goodness. Oh, do Thou enkindle a flame of undying gratitude to Thee, on the clay-cold altar of my heart. I mourn and lament that I am so little and so feebly affected by the magnitude of Thy mercies, and especially by the riches of Thy grace and love manifested in Jesus;—that my affections are so little alive to the incalculable obligation under which I am laid to Him who hath "loved me with an everlasting love." I am doubly Thine. Creation and redemption combine in claiming all I am, and all I have, for Thee and Thy service. Good Lord, preserve me from the sin of insensibility to Thine unwearied kindness—of taking Thy mercies as matters of course, and thus living in a state of independence of Thee. May my whole existence become a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving—may all my do-

ings testify the sincerity and devotion of a heart feelingly alive to every gift of the great Giver; and, especially, may I be so brought under the constraining influence of redeeming love, as to consecrate every power of my body and every faculty of my soul to Him who so willingly consecrated and shed His very life's blood for me.

Lord, this day shine upon me with the light of Thy countenance; may every mercy I experience in the course of it be hallowed and sweetened by the thought that it comes from God. And, while ever mindful and thankful in the midst of present mercies, teach me to keep in view the crowning mercy of all—the hope of at last sharing Thy presence and full fruition, and of joining in the eternal ascription with the ransomed multitude above, who cease not day nor night to celebrate Thy praises.

Bless all near and dear to me. Defend them by Thy mighty power. Give *them*, too, gratitude for mercies past, and the sure and

well-grounded hope of a glorious inheritance in that better world, where mercy is unmixed with judgment, and joy undarkened by sorrow. And all I ask is for Jesus' sake. Amen.

"CAUSE ME TO HEAR THY LOVING-KINDNESS IN THE MORNING, FOR IN THEE DO I TRUST."

Twelfth Morning.

FOR CRUCIFIXION OF SIN.

"I die daily."—1 Cor. xv. 31.

Heavenly Father, who hast permitted me, in Thy great mercy, to see the light of another day, enable me to begin and to end it with Thee. Let all my thoughts, and purposes, and actions have the superscription written on them—"Holiness to the Lord."

Give me to know the blessedness of reconciliation—what it is, as a sinner, and the chief of sinners, to come "just as I am, without one plea," to that blood "which cleanseth from all sin." I desire to take hold of the sublime assurance, that Jesus is "able to save unto the uttermost"—that He has left nothing for me as a suppliant at Thy throne—a

pensioner on Thy bounty—but to accept all as the gift and purchase of free, unmerited grace.

While I look to Him as my Saviour from the *penalty*, may I know Him also as my Deliverer from the *power* of sin. I have to lament that so often I have yielded to its solicitations—that my heart, a temple of the Holy Ghost, has been so often profaned and dishonored by the "accursed thing," marring my spiritual joy, and sorely interrupting communion with the Lord I love. Give me grace to exercise a godly jealousy over my traitor affections—to live nearer Thee—to have the magnet of my heart more centered on Thyself—to keep the eye of faith more steadily on Jesus—to live more habitually under "the powers of the world to come." Thou knowest my *besetting* sin—the plague of my heart, which so often leads to a guilty estrangement. Lord, cut down this root of bitterness. Let me nail it to Thy cross. Let me be ever on the watch-tower, ready to resist the first as-

sault of the enemy. Let it be to me at once a precept and a promise—"Sin shall not have dominion over you." Oh show me that my strength to repel temptation is in Jesus alone. Put me in the cleft of the rock when the hurricane is passing by. May I be as willing to surrender all for my Saviour—my heart-sins and life-sins—as He willingly surrendered His all for me. May I be enabled to say, "Lord, I am Thine."

Every idol I utterly abolish. Save me, blessed Saviour, from a deceitful heart and a seductive world. Let me see more and more the beauties of holiness. Let me ever be basking in the rays of Thy love—approaching nearer and nearer Thee, thou "Sun of my soul." May Thy loveliness and glory eclipse all created beams, and may I look forward with bounding heart to that time when all that helps to lighten up earth's pathway shall be obscured in the shadow of death, and I shall be ushered into the glories of that better and brighter scene, where "the sun shall no

more go down, neither shall the moon withdraw itself, but where the Lord my God shall be my everlasting light."

And what I ask for myself, I desire in behalf of those near and dear to me. Do Thou "sanctify them wholly." May they, too, crucify sin, and "die daily." May this be the happy history of all of us—"Being made free from sin, and having become the servants of God, we have our fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." Amen.

"CAUSE ME TO HEAR THY LOVING-KINDNESS IN THE MORNING, FOR IN THEE DO I TRUST."

Thirteenth Morning.

FOR GROWTH IN HOLINESS.

"Grow in grace."—2 Pet. iii. 18.

O God, draw near to me in Thy great mercy. Another peaceful morning has dawned upon me. May it be mine to know the happiness of those who walk all the day in the light of Thy countenance.

O thou best and kindest of beings, teach me to know, amid the smiles and the frowns, the joys and the sorrows, of an ever-changing world, what it is to have an unchanging refuge and portion in Thee. I can mourn no blank, I can feel no solitude, when I have Thy presence and love. If I have naught beside—stripped and denuded of every other

blessing—I have the richest of all, if I be at peace with God.

I desire to dwell with devout contemplation on the infinite loveliness of Thy moral nature. Lord, I long to have this guilty, erring soul, moulded and fashioned in increasing conformity to Thy blessed mind and will. Let my great concern henceforth be, to love, and serve, and please Thee more and more. May all Thy dealings with me, of whatever kind they be, contribute in promoting this growth in holiness. May prosperity draw forth a perpetual thank-offering of praise for unmerited mercies. May adversity purify away the dross of worldliness and sin. May every day be finding the power of sin weaker and weaker, and the dominion of grace stronger and stronger. Living under the powers of a world to come, may I look forward with joyful expectation to the time when sin shall no longer impede my spiritual growth—when Satan shall be disarmed of his power, and my own heart of its deceitfulness

—when every faculty of a glorified and exalted nature shall be enlisted in Thy service in a world of eternal joy.

O thou blessed Advocate within the veil—Thou who art even now interceding for Thy tried and tempted saints, "that their faith fail not"—do Thou impart unto me a constant supply of Thy promised grace. Not only sprinkle my heart with Thy blood, but conquer it by Thy love. Fill me with deep contrition for an erring past—inspire me with purposes of new obedience for the future. May I know, in my sweet experience, that "Thy yoke is easy, and Thy burden light"—that, growing in holiness, I am growing in happiness too. Give me an increasing tenderness of conscience about sin—lead me, with more filial devotedness, to cultivate a holy fear of offending so gracious a Father. Habitually realizing my new covenant relationship to Thee, may I ever be ready to exclaim, with joyful sincerity, "O Lord, truly I am Thy servant!"

Revive, blessed God, Thine own work everywhere. "Take unto Thee Thy great power, and reign." Remove all hardness and blindness of heart—all contempt of Thy Word. May it have free course and be glorified.

Bless my dear friends. However far separated from one another, we can ever meet at the same throne of the heavenly grace, pleading the same "exceeding great and precious promises." May we all be following the same path of grace now, and meet amid the endless joys of glory hereafter. And all I ask is for Jesus' sake. Amen.

"CAUSE ME TO HEAR THY LOVING-KINDNESS IN THE MORNING, FOR IN THEE DO I TRUST."

Fourteenth Morning.

FOR VICTORY OVER THE WORLD.

"Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world."—1 JOHN v. 4.

O ETERNAL, everlasting God, Thou art glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, continually doing wonders. Heaven and earth are full of the majesty of Thy glory. Thou, the almighty keeper of Israel, never slumberest. There is not the moment I am away from Thy wakeful vigilance. In the defenceless hours of sleep, as well as amid life's activities and toils, Thou art ever the same—"compassing my path and my lying down, and intimately acquainted with all my ways."

I rejoice to think that I have the assurance of such unwearying watchfulness and care,

in a world "lying in wickedness." Blessed Jesus, in the world Thou hast forewarned me to expect tribulation, but, nevertheless, I will "be of good cheer, for Thou hast overcome the world." Thou hast traversed its wilderness-depths—Thou hast passed through the shadow of its darkest valley. I cannot dread what Thou hast trodden and conquered.

But, alas! I have to mourn that the world which crucified Thee, should be so much loved by me—that its pleasures should be so fascinating—its pursuits so engrossing. Wean me from it. Break its alluring spell. Strip it of its counterfeit charms. Discover to me its hollowness—the treachery of its promises—the precariousness of its best blessings—the fleeting nature of its most enduring friendships. I take comfort in the thought, "The Lord God is a sun and shield." The world has deceived me, but Thou never hast. Guide me by Thy counsel. Saviour-God, let me come up from the wilderness leaning on Thine arm, exulting, amid its legion-foes, that greater is He

that is with me than all they that can be against me.

O Thou who, in Thy last prayer on earth, didst so touchingly say of Thy pilgrim people, "These are in the world;" do Thou still bend Thy pitying eye upon me, as I travel, burdened with sin and sorrow, through the valley of tears. Do Thou so "sanctify me through Thy truth," that, though *in* the world, I may not be *of* it—not conformed to its sinful practices and lying vanities. Bring me to say, with regard to all in it that was once so fascinating, "My soul is even as a weaned child." With my face Zionwards, may I declare plainly that I seek "a better country."

Grant that this day, in all my worldly intercourse, I may have the realizing sense of Thy presence and nearness. May I set a watch on my heart, and keep the door of my lips. May cherished feelings of love and devotedness to Thee be intermingled with all life's duties and engagements. May I know that a simple faith in Jesus is the great se

cret of victory over the world. O may the trembling magnet of my vacillating affections be ever pointing to Him, and then I shall be made "more than conqueror."

Through His all-prevailing merits and advocacy, hear my prayer. In His most precious blood, forgive all my sins. By His indwelling grace, sanctify my nature, that my whole body, soul, and spirit may be preserved blameless until His coming. Amen.

"CAUSE ME TO HEAR THY LOVING-KINDNESS IN THE MORNING, FOR IN THEE DO I TRUST."

Fifteenth Morning.

FOR DEEPER VIEWS OF SELF.

"Search me, O God, and know my heart."—
Ps. cxxxix. 23.

O ETERNAL, everlasting God, who hast once more enlightened my eyes, and suffered me not to sleep the sleep of death, bestow upon me this day the riches of Thy grace and love. Morning after morning is dawning upon me, with new tokens of Thy mercy. Oh, may these be bringing me nearer the glorious day which is to know no night—that eternal noontide when all shadows and darkness are forever to flee away!

Lord, I am unworthy to come into Thy presence, and yet I have to mourn that I do not feel this deep unworthiness as I ought. I am unwilling to see into the unknown depths of

my sin. I do not know myself. I have no depressing consciousness of the desperate wickedness of my own evil heart. I have buried many bypast transgressions in oblivion. I have deluded myself with the thought, that many were too trivial and unimportant to incur Thy disapproval. Even any imperfect good which Thy grace has enabled me to perform, I have been too prone to take the merit to myself, instead of ascribing all the praise to Thee. There has been pride in my humility. There have been mingled motives in my best services. My best resolutions have been fitful and transient. My purest and most disinterested actions could not stand the scrutiny of Thine eye. The holiest day I ever spent, were I to be judged by it, would condemn me.

O Thou who "searchest Jerusalem with lighted candles," do Thou "search my heart." Bring me to the publican's place of penitential sorrow, exclaiming, in self-renouncing humility, "God be merciful to me a sinner!"

I would seek to make a more entire and undivided surrender of all I am and have to Thee. Give me such an awful and affecting sense of my vileness, that I may never feel safe but when close by the atoning Fountain, drawing out of it hourly supplies. May mine be a daily heart and self and sin crucifixion—an eternal severance from those bosom traitors which have so long separated between me and my God. Make me more zealous for Thy honor and glory—"Cleanse Thou the thoughts of my heart, by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit"—"Let no iniquity obtain dominion over me." But may it be my daily ambition to become more like to Thee, reflecting more of the image, and imbibing more of the spirit, of my Divine Redeemer, that thus the atmosphere of holiness and of heaven may be diffused all around me. May my own soul be pervaded with lofty and purified aspirations. May I be enabled to exhibit to the world the felt happiness of close walking with God.

And do Thou, gracious Father, "send forth

thy light and thy truth" to a darkened world. May Thine own ancient people be speedily gathered in with the fulness of the Gentile nations, that all ends of the earth may see the salvation of God.

Bless all my dear friends, near or distant. May they have the heritage of those that fear Thy name. Defend them now by thy mighty power, and at last number them with thy saints in glory everlasting. Amen.

"CAUSE ME TO HEAR THY LOVING-KINDNESS IN THE MORNING, FOR IN THEE DO I TRUST."

Sixteenth Morning.

OR BRIGHTER VIEWS OF JESUS.

"That I may know Him."—PHIL. iii. 10.

BLESSED Jesus!—Sun of my soul!—Light of my life!—do Thou shine upon me this morning with the "brightness of Thy rising." May I enjoy this day union and communion with Thee. May a sense of Thy favor pervade all its duties, sanctify its blessings, and lighten its trials. May it be to me the sweetest and holiest of all thoughts, that Thou art ever with me—that, though unseen to the eye of sense, the eye of faith can discern Thy gracious presence and the manifestations of Thy nearness and love. May the realized assurance, that Thou art thus at my side, dispel every misgiving, and dry every tear. May I

hear Thee, even now, saying unto me, "Lo, I am with you"—I am with you now—I shall be with you "alway"—and when the world is ended, "I will" that you "be with me where I am, that you may behold my glory!"

O adorable Saviour, how sadly is Thy beauty obscured from my view, by reason of my own sin! How feebly do I apprehend the mystery of Thy love—the glories of Thy person—the perfection of Thine atonement. Hide me in the clefts of the rock, and while there, "I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory." May every fresh glimpse of "the great love wherewith Thou hast loved me" rebuke the lukewarmness of my own. May I covet a closer walk with Thee. May my existence be one continued Emmaus journey—its hours passing joyously by, because happy in the presence and converse of a risen Redeemer. Blessed Jesus, "abide with me," for the day is "far spent." Let me walk with Thee in newness of life. May I breathe Thy spirit of holy submission—of cheerful obedience—

of patience under injuries. May I not repine at bearing the cross, so meekly borne for me; nor murmur at my trials, when I think of Thine. May I be enabled to make every lineament of Thy spotless character my daily study, so as gradually to be transformed into the same image, from glory to glory—looking forward to that blessed time when I shall see Thee without one stain of remaining sin to dim the contemplation, and when I shall be permitted to bathe in the ocean of Thine eternal love.

I thank Thee for the mercies of the bypast night. Give me to reckon every new day a fresh gift of Thy dying grace—to regard all its hours as redeemed hours—every moment as "bought with a price." May these days, and hours, and moments, thus stamped with the cross, be consecrated more than ever to Thy praise.

Again, I beseech Thee, "abide with me." "Where Thou goest I will go, and where Thou dwellest I will dwell." Abide with me

from morning to evening, and from evening to morning again. "Without Thee I cannot live"—"without Thee I dare not die." Living or dying, Lord, I would seek to be Thine.

Forgive all my many sins, and when the feeble glimpses of a feeble love on earth are at an end, bring me at last to enjoy brighter views of Thee in glory everlasting. Amen.

"CAUSE ME TO HEAR THY LOVING-KINDNESS IN THE MORNING, FOR IN THEE DO I TRUST."

Seventeenth Morning.

FOR NEARER VIEWS OF HEAVEN.

"They shall behold the land that is very far off."—ISAIAH xxxiii. 17.

O GOD, in the multitude of Thy mercies I am again permitted to see the light of a new day. With another rising morn do Thou scatter all the clouds of sin and unbelief from my soul. Unfold to my view bright glimpses of Thyself—sweet foretastes of those joys which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard."

Here, Lord, I have "no continuing city"—change is my portion in this the house of my pilgrimage—"I would not live alway." I am "willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." Wean me from this uncertain world. Bring

me to live under the powers of a world to come. I rejoice to think of the happy myriads already in glory—"clothed in white robes, with palms in their hands"—safe in the presence of the Master they love, with every tear-drop wiped away. I rejoice to know that the blood and grace to which they owe their crowns are still free as ever. O may I be enabled, with some good measure of triumphant assurance, to say, "Henceforth there is laid up for *me* a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day." May the thought of that endless, sinless, sorrowless immortality reconcile me to all earth's severest discipline. Let me not murmur under the heaviest cross in the prospect of such a crown. Let me not refuse to pass cheerfully through the hottest furnace which is to refine and purify me for this "exceeding weight of glory;" but bear with calm equanimity whatever Thou seest meet to lay upon me. "Weep-

ing may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."

Lord, grant that the approach of eternity may urge me to greater diligence in Thy service. May I have my loins girded and my lamp burning. May I spend each day, and this day, as if it were to be my last. When the shadows of evening gather around me, may I feel that I have spent a day for God. Nearer a dying hour—may it find me nearer heaven.

What I ask for myself I would seek in behalf of all my beloved friends. Sprinkle each heart with the blood of the covenant. May every eye be directed to Jesus, and every footstep be pointing heavenward. Though severed from one another now, may we not be found gathered in different bundles on the great reaping-day of judgment.

Lord, unite Thine own people more and more. Why should we be guilty of such sad estrangements, crossing and re-crossing one another on life's highway with alien and

jealous looks, when professing to be sprinkled with the same blood, to bear the same name, and be heirs of the same inheritance? Let me live near to Jesus, and then I shall live near all His people, looking forward to that blessed time when we shall see eye to eye, and heart to heart—no jarring or discordant note to mar the everlasting ascription of "blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, forever and ever." Amen.

"CAUSE ME TO HEAR THY LOVING-KINDNESS IN THE MORNING, FOR IN THEE DO I TRUST."

Eighteenth Morning.

FOR WEANEDNESS FROM THE CREATURE.

"There is none upon earth that I desire besides Thee."—Ps. lxxiii. 25.

O Lord, Thou blessed fountain of all happiness and joy, do Thou draw near to me this morning in Thy great mercy. All creature-comforts are emanations from Thee. Thy favor is life—Thy displeasure is worse than death. In losing Thee, we lose our all—in having Thee, we can want nothing.

I have to acknowledge, with shame and confusion of face, that I have not thus been seeking my true enjoyment in Thee. I have been in pursuit of fleeting shadows, which one by one have eluded my grasp. I have been worshipping and serving the creature more than the Creator, who is "God over all,

blessed for evermore." Lord, bring me to see that nothing short of Thyself can satisfy the longings and desires of my immortal nature. Wean me from what is perishable. Let me reverentially acquiesce in whatever means Thou mayest employ to bring my wandering heart back to Thee, O thou alone-satisfying portion of my soul. Rather, Lord, would I submit to the hardest discipline than listen to the withering words, "Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone." Let me feel that Thy presence and love can compensate for the loss of all earthly joys. As prop after prop which has gladdened my pilgrimage totters and falls, may I know what it is to "dwell in the secret place of the Most High, and to abide under the shadow of the Almighty." As Thou art ever proclaiming over creature-confidence, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return," may I know what it is to cleave to One who is better and surer than the nearest and dearest on earth—the Friend that never fails, and never wearies, and never

dies—"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever."

Blessed Saviour, I devolve my every care on Thee. Thou art noting now on the throne the pangs and sorrows of every burdened heart. All other love is imperfect. All other sympathy is selfish but Thine. May my affections be consecrated to Thee. May it be my joy to serve Thee—my privilege to follow Thee, and, if need be, to suffer with Thee. May every cross lose its bitterness by having Thee at my side. May I feel that nothing but absence from Thee can create a real blank in my heart. Thy presence takes the sting from all afflictions, and imparts security in the midst of all troubles. Living or dying, may I be Thine.

Sprinkle me this new morning with the blood of the covenant. May I feel all throughout the day the joy of being reconciled to God. May my heart be made a little sanctuary of praise. May I breathe the atmosphere of heaven. May God himself be so enthroned

in my affections, that I may be enabled to say, in comparison with Him, of all that the world can give, "There is none upon the earth that I desire besides Thee."

Heavenly Father, I leave all that belongs to me to Thee—"Undertake Thou for them." Bless them and make them blessings. "Hide them under the shadow of thy wings" until earth's "calamities be overpast." Hear this my morning supplication; and when thou hearest, forgive. And all I ask is for Jesus' sake. Amen.

"CAUSE ME TO HEAR THY LOVING-KINDNESS IN THE MORNING, FOR IN THEE DO I TRUST."

Nineteenth Morning.

FOR LOWLINESS OF MIND.

'He giveth grace unto the humble."—1 Pet. v. 5.

O God, Thou art "the high and the lofty One who inhabiteth eternity." There is no being truly great but Thee. All other excellence and glory is derived—Thine is underived. All else is finite—Thine is infinite. The burning seraph nearest Thy throne is the humblest of all Thy creatures, because he gets the nearest view of the majesty of Thy glory.

Lord, fill my soul this morning with suitable views of Thy greatness, and a humbling estimate of my own nothingness. I would lie low at Thy feet—in wonder and amazement that dust and ashes should be permitted to

approach that Being whom angels worship with folded wings, and in whose sight the very "heavens are not clean." Repress every proud, self-glorying imagination. Let me feel I cannot abase myself enough in thy presence. "Lord, I am vile; what can I answer Thee?" My best thoughts, how polluted!—my best services, how imperfect!—my best affections, how lukewarm!—my best prayers, how cold!—my best hours, were I judged by them, how would I be condemned!

I desire to take refuge at the cross of a crucified Saviour. Here, Lord, give me that grace Thou hast promised to the lowly. Self-renouncing and sin-renouncing, I would seek to be exalted only in Jesus, crying out "God be merciful to me a sinner!" In broken-heartedness of soul, I mourn the past. Distrustful of the future, I look only to Thee. Full of my own unworthiness, I turn to the infinitely worthy *One*. I seek to be washed in His blood—sanctified by His Spirit—guided by His counsel—depending on Him for every supply of

grace—and feeling that without Him I must perish.

May I take the humility and gentleness of Jesus as my pattern. Like Him, may I be meek and lowly in heart. Give me grace to avoid ostentation and pride, haughtiness and vanity, envy and uncharitableness. "In lowliness of mind, may I esteem others better than myself." Let me realize every moment that I am a pensioner on Divine bounty—that I am alike "for temporals and spirituals" dependent on Thee—and that it well becomes me to be "clothed with humility." O let me meekly and submissively lose my own will in Thine, in childlike teachableness, saying—"What wilt *Thou* have me to do?" May no murmur escape my lips at Thy dealings. May this lowliness of spirit lead me rather to wonder at thy sparing mercy, that the great and holy Being I have provoked so long by my rebellion has not "cut me down."

Bless all connected to me by endearing bonds. May nature's ties be made doubly

st ong by those of covenant grace. Bless Thy cause and kingdom in the world. May Thy Spirit descend "like rain upon the mown grass, and showers that water the earth."

I commit myself unto Thee, and to the word of Thy grace. Guide me this day by Thy counsel. May I spend it as if it were to be my last. And when my last day *does* arrive, may it be to me the eve of a happy eternity. And all I ask is for Jesus' sake. Amen.

"CAUSE ME TO HEAR THY LOVING-KINDNESS IN THE MORNING, FOR IN THEE DO I TRUST."

Twentieth Morning.

FOR SIMPLICITY OF FAITH.

"Only believe."—Mark v. 36.

O ETERNAL, ever-blessed Jehovah—Fountain of all light—Source of all happiness—"God of all grace"—look down upon me this morning with that love which "Thou bearest to Thine own," as I venture anew into Thy sacred presence. Let me enjoy a sweet season of fellowship with Thee. Let the world be shut out, and may I feel alone with God. "Under the shadow of Thy wings would I rejoice."

I come in the nothingness of the creature, standing alone in the fulness of Jesus. I come, "just as I am, without one plea"—as a sinner, and as the "chief of sinners"—to

Thee, Thou almighty Saviour. I seek to disown all creature-confidence, and, with all the burden of my guilt, to cast myself, for time and for eternity, at Thy feet. "Lord, save me, else I perish." I cannot stand in myself. I can stand only in Him who has stood so willing a Surety for me—who is still at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, presenting my name, and my prayers, and my plea, before the throne. I *have* no other confidence, and I *need* no other. Jesus, I am complete in Thee. Let me not look inwardly on myself, where there is everything to sink me in despondency and dismay; but let me look with the undivided and unwavering eye of faith to Thy bleeding sacrifice. I rejoice to think of the many robes in the Church triumphant Thy blood has already made white. I rejoice to know that the same blood is free as ever—the same invitation is addressed as ever—the promise and the Promiser remain "faithful" as ever—"Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out."

Lord, I come—I plead Thy word. I come, irrespective of all I am, and all I have been. Magnify Thy grace in me. Show me my utter beggary and wretchedness by nature—that every step to glory is a step of grace; and while, with childlike faith, I rest on the finished work of Jesus, may I have the same simple trust and confidence in all His dealings towards me. May I feel that the Shepherd of Israel cannot lead me wrong—that His own way must be the safest and the best. Lord, "undertake Thou for me"—"I will follow Thee to prison and to death." Take me—lead me—use me, as Thou seest good. If I need chastisement, give me chastisement. If I need rebuke, let me not repine under the rod. Let me trust a Father's word—a Father's love—a Father's discipline. "Though Thou slay me, yet will I trust in Thee."

And as for myself, so for all dear to me. I pray that it may please Thee, of Thine infinite mercy, to visit them with Thy salvation—to guide them by Thy counsel—to overrule

all life's changes, and vicissitudes, and trials for their well-being, and at last to bring them safe to Thine eternal kingdom, through Jesus Christ—to whom, with Thee, O Father, and Thee, O eternal Spirit, three in one in covenant for our redemption, be ascribed all blessing, and honor, and glory, and praise, world without end. Amen.

"CAUSE ME TO HEAR THY LOVING-KINDNESS IN THE MORNING, FOR IN THEE DO I TRUST."

Twenty-first Morning.

FOR CONSISTENCY OF WALK.

"Walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing."—Col. i. 10.

O Lord, Thou art the heart-searching and the rein-trying God. To Thee all hearts are open—from Thee no secrets are hid. Cleanse Thou the thoughts of my heart this day, by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit. I would seek to begin its hours with Thee. May all its business and employments be perfumed with the fragrance of "the morning sacrifice."

O Thou great origin and end of all things, be Thou to me the Alpha and the Omega of my daily being. May I feel existence to be a blank without Thee. May I feel that I can only be truly happy when a sense of Thy

favor, and friendship, and love is sweetly intermingled with life's duties—thus lessening every burden—hallowing every trial—diminishing every cross!

I come to Thee once more, an unworthy sinner, to cast myself at my Saviour's feet. What am I, that Thou shouldst have borne with me so long! The axe "laid at the root of the trees" might long ago have cut me down; but I, a guilty cumberer, am still spared. The retrospect of existence, while a retrospect of patience and forbearance on Thy part, is one of mournful rebellion and ingratitude on mine. I have had a "name to live," but how much spiritual death in my best frames! I have had a form of godliness; how little have I lived out and acted out its power! More careful have I been to *appear* to be a Christian than really to *be* a Christian. How much unevenness in my walk—how much proclaimed and professed by the lip has been undone and denied in the life!

I come this morning to ask anew for mercy to pardon, and grace to help me. Especially do Thou give me the grace of a holy consistency, doing all for Thy glory, having boldness to speak for Thee in the world. May my walk and conversation be the living evidence and expression of the sincerity and reality of the inner life.

For this end may I live more on Jesus. May my life be "hid with Christ in God." May I grow more and more out of myself, and *into* my living Head. Self-humbled and self-emptied, may I be ever resorting to the all-fulness of an all-sufficient Saviour. May this be my habitual feeling—"Without Him I can do nothing." May this be my constant prayer—"Help me, Saviour, or I die."

May I be enabled this day, in His strength, to do something for God. However lowly my lot, however humble my abilities, may I feel, Lord, that Thou hast work for me in Thy vineyard. Let me not bury my talent in the earth; may I "occupy it till Thou come,"

that "Thou mayest receive thine own with usury."

Have mercy on Thy whole Church. Pour out on all its members and office-bearers the spirit of meekness and zeal, of power and love, and of a sound mind. May "Holiness to the Lord" be written on its portals!

Hasten the blessed period when the love of Jesus, being enthroned in every heart, and every Church, "we all shall be one." And all I ask is for the Redeemer's sake. Amen.

"CAUSE ME TO HEAR THY LOVING-KINDNESS IN THE MORNING, FOR IN THEE DO I TRUST."

Twenty-second Morning.

FOR SINGLENESS OF EYE.

"This one thing I do."—Phil. iii. 13.

My Father who art in heaven, teach me, in childlike faith and confidence, to draw near this morning to Thy throne of grace. Vouchsafe me the blessed influences of Thy Holy Spirit, that I may wait on Thee undisturbed by worldly distractions, and enter on the duties of another day with my mind "stayed on God."

Blessed Jesus!—Thou who didst so freely give Thyself a ransom for many—save me, else I perish! I have no peace but in Thy pardoning, reconciling love. May Thy blood and righteousness be to me "a glorious dress," arrayed in which I may now and ever

stand fearless and undismayed. I bless Thee, O God, if I have in any degree felt the preciousness of the Saviour, and His adaptation to all the wants and weaknesses of my sinful, and sorrowful, and tempted nature. I thank Thee if Thou hast already hidden me in the clefts of the smitten Rock. My prayer is, that Thou mayest keep me there—that I may lean upon Jesus more than ever, and seek my happiness more exclusively in His service. May I every morning be drawn more closely by the cords of His love, and be led to fight more faithfully under His banner.

O for greater singleness of aim!—more self-emptying and self-abasing—that He may be all in all! Lord, I am conscious often of mingled motives, that would not stand the test of Thy pure eye and Thy holy Word. How often do I forfeit the joys of assurance by admitting rival claimants to the throne of my affections. How often are the surpassing interests and glories of eternity dimmed and

obscured by the engrossing things of time and of sense! How mixed with imperfection, and earthliness, and self-seeking are my best attempts to serve Thee! If weighed in the balance, how would my holiest services be found wanting!

Give me more of this unity and simplicity of purpose. Give me to make salvation more the one thing needful. Let all other love be subordinated to Thine. Do Thou be my "chiefest joy." May Thy service be my delight. May my heart become a little sanctuary, whence the incense of praise, and love, and thanksgiving is ascending continually. May it glow with holy zeal to promote Thy cause, and testify of Thy grace. Remembering all that Thou hast done for me, may I be animated to make a more entire consecration and surrender of all I am and have to Thy glory.

Let me feel that whatever my rank, or station, or circumstances are, I have some mission to perform for Thee. How often dost

Thou choose "the foolish things of the world to confound the things that are mighty!" Let me not think my talent too trifling to trade upon. May I "occupy it till my Lord comes." Let me not squander fleeting moments, or forego fleeting opportunities. "The night cometh, wherein none of us can work." Enable me now, bowing at Thy mercy-seat, to replenish anew my empty vessel with the oil of Thy grace, that the lamp of faith may be kept burning brightly all the day. All that I ask is for Jesus' sake. Amen.

"CAUSE ME TO HEAR THY LOVING-KINDNESS IN THE MORNING, FOR IN THEE DO I TRUST."

Twenty-third Morning.

FOR FILIAL NEARNESS.

"Abba, Father."—Rom viii. 15.

Most blessed God, I rejoice that I can look up to Thee, the mightiest of all Beings, and call Thee by that name, which may well dispel all misgivings, and hush all disquietudes —"My Father who art in heaven."

Father, I have sinned against heaven and in Thy sight. The kindest of earthly parents could not so long have borne with ingratitude and waywardness like mine. Long ere now Thou mightest righteously have driven me an exile and a cast-away from Thy presence. But the voice of parental mercy is not silenced. The hand of parental patience and love is "stretched out still." In the midst of de-

served wrath, this is Thine own gracious declaration, "I will be a Father unto you!"

I mourn my grievous departures—my repeated declensions—my heinous ingratitude. Oh, let me no longer live in this state of guilty estrangement—forfeiting all the joys of a Father's tenderness, the sunshine of a Father's smile. May I know what it is for the soul, orphaned, and portionless, and friendless by nature, to repose in the security of Thy covenant-love. May I be enabled to enjoy more and more, every day, holy filial nearness to the mercy-seat—there unburdening into Thine ear all my wants and trials—my sorrows and perplexities—my backslidings and sins. Give me grace to bow with childlike submission to a Father's will—to bear without a murmur a Father's rod—to hear in every dealing, joyous or sorrowful, a Father's voice—and when death comes, to have every fear dispelled by listening to a Father's summons—"To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

Jesus, Thou blessed Elder Brother! "in

whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named," may I be enabled to imitate Thine example of holy resignation to Thy Father's will. May the cup of bitterest earthly sorrow be taken into my hands with Thine own breathing of devout submission—"This cup which Thou givest me to drink, shall I not drink it? Even so, Father, for so it seems good in Thy sight." It is my comfort, blessed Lord, to know, that while the best of earthly parents may err, Thou, the unerring God, never canst. In Thy most mysterious dealings there is wisdom. In Thy roughest voice there is mercy.

Adorable Redeemer, all these filial blessings and adoption-privileges I owe to Thee. It is Thy precious blood-shedding which has "set me among the children"—it is that which still keeps me there. Anew this day would I repair to Thy cross—anew would I supplicate that the Holy Spirit, the Divine Comforter, would be sent forth into my heart, enabling me to cry, "Abba, Father." May

the thought of this blessed affiance in Thee, support me amid life's fitful changes and transient friendships, and may I be enabled to dwell with holy delight on that glorious time, when, no longer an exiled pilgrim in a strange land, I shall be received at the gates of glory with a Father's welcome—"Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine."

I commend myself and all near and dear to me, this day, to Thy fatherly care and keeping. And all I ask is for Jesus' sake. Amen.

"CAUSE ME TO HEAR THY LOVING-KINDNESS IN THE MORNING, FOR IN THEE DO I TRUST."

Twenty-fourth Morning.

FOR RESTORATION TO FAVOR.

"Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation."—Ps. li. 12.

O God, another morning has dawned upon me. "Thou better Sun of righteousness"—with the brightness of Thy rising, may all the shadows of guilt and sin be dispersed. I come, weak and weary, guilty and heavy-laden, to Thee, beseeching Thee to bend Thy pitying eye upon me—to deal not with me as I have deserved, nor reward me according to mine iniquity. Blessed Jesus, look upon me. In Thee may I be pitied, pardoned, and forgiven!

I have erred and strayed from Thy way as a lost sheep. I have wandered from the home of my God. I have been seeking my happi-

ness in what is shadowy and unreal. The world and its delusive hopes have been preferred to Thee. My heart, which ought ever to be a little altar and sanctuary of praise, has burned with false incense. Thy love and glory have not maintained their paramount place in my affections. I have righteously forfeited "the joys of Thy salvation." My only marvel is, that, as a wandering star, Thou hast not left me to drift onwards to the blackness of darkness forever. O leave me not to perish! I mourn my wanderings. In leaving Thee, I feel I have left my Best Friend. I have caused an aching void in this heart, which the world, with all its joys and riches and pleasures, can never fill. I cannot have one hour of happiness, if mingled with the thought that I am estranged from Thee, my God. Blissful hours of Thy favor I once enjoyed, come sorrowfully to my remembrance; and, though the cup of earthly happiness be full to the brim, I have still to breathe the prayer—"Oh that it were with me as in

months past, when the candle of the Lord did shine!"

"Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation." Leave me not in this state of distance and alienation. "O Lord, I beseech Thee, deliver my soul." Snap these chains of earthliness that are still binding me to the dust, that, on the wings of faith, I may soar upwards, and find rest and quietude where alone it can be found—in Thy renewed love and favor. May past backslidings drive me more to Thy grace. Nothing in myself, may I find and feel that my all in all is in Thee. Discover to me my own emptiness, and the overflowing fulness of Jesus. May I every day see more of His matchless excellencies—His incomparable loveliness—the sweets of His service—that I may never feel tempted to wander from His fold, and carefully avoid all that would risk the forfeiture of that favor which indeed is "life."

Lord, let me know *this* day something of this happiness. Let me not be content with

the *name* to live. Let religion be with me a real thing—let it be everything;—life-influencing, sin-subduing, self-renouncing. Let me diffuse all around me the happy glow of a spirit that feels at peace with God.

And now, Lord, what wait I for? "My hope" for myself, my friends, and all for whom I ought to pray, "is in Thee." Listen to these my supplications; and all I ask is for Jesus' sake. Amen.

"CAUSE ME TO HEAR THY LOVING-KINDNESS IN THE MORNING, FOR IN THEE DO I TRUST."

Twenty-fifth Morning.

FOR A PILGRIM SPIRIT.

"And confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."—Heb. xi. 13.

O God, again, in the multitude of Thy mercies, Thou art permitting me to approach the footstool of Thy throne. I am another day nearer death—oh, may I be a day nearer Thee! With a new morning's dawn may I hear the pilgrim summons—"Arise, for this is not your rest." Ere I mingle with the world, give me to feel I am not *of* it, but born *from* above, and *for* above; and cherishing more and more of a pilgrim spirit, may my prayer and watchword be—"I desire a better country."

Lord, I bless Thee for the rich provision Thou hast made for the wilderness journey—

for all Thy mercies, temporal, providential, and spiritual. Forbid that the manifold gifts of Thy love should draw me away from Thyself, the bountiful Giver, or obliterate the solemn impression—"I am a stranger with Thee and a sojourner, as all my fathers were." May I "use the world without abusing it." By the varied discipline of Thy providence, may I be led to feel that all my well-springs are in Thee. May the world's fascinations be becoming more powerless—sin more hated—holiness more loved—heaven more realized—God more "the exceeding joy" of my soul. Driven from all creature-stays and earthly refuges, may Jesus be the prop and staff of my pilgrimage. When the world is bright, may I rest upon Him, and seek that He sanctify my prosperity. When the wilderness is dreary, and the way dark, may He hallow adversity. When friends are removed, may I feel that I have One left more faithful than the best of all earthly friends; and when death comes, and the pilgrim warfare ceases,

leaning confidingly on that same arm, may I enter the pilgrim's rest.

O adorable Saviour!—Thou who wast once Thyself a pilgrim—the lonely, weary, homeless, afflicted One—who hadst often no arm to lean upon, and no voice to cheer Thee—an outcast wanderer and sojourner in Thine own creation—I rejoice to think that Thou hast trodden all this wilderness-world before me—that Thou knowest its dreariest paths. I take comfort in the assurance that there is at the right hand of the Majesty on high, a Fellow-Sufferer, who has drunk of every "brook in the way"—shed every tear of earthly sorrow—heaved every sigh of earthly suffering—and who, being Himself the "tried and tempted One," is able and willing to succor every pilgrim who is tried and tempted too.

I beseech Thee this day to look down in great kindness on all my beloved friends. Seal to them a saving interest in Thy great salvation. Wash them all in Thy blood—sanctify them all by Thy Spirit. May not

one be wanting on "the day when Thou makest up Thy jewels."

Compassionate a fallen world. Thy Church is slumbering—the enemy is all vigilant—souls are perishing. Arise, Lord, and plead Thine own cause. Promote greater unity, and love, and concord among Thine own people. Let us be nearer Jesus, and then we shall be nearer one another. Give us all more of the single eye to Thy glory. Make us more self-sacrificing—more heavenly-minded—more Saviour-like. And all I ask is for Jesus' sake. Amen.

"CAUSE ME TO HEAR THY LOVING-KINDNESS IN THE MORNING, FOR IN THEE DO I TRUST."

Twenty-sixth Morning.

FOR PREPARATION FOR DEATH.

"Prepare to meet thy God."—Amos iv. 12.

O ETERNAL, everlasting God—Author of my being—my continual, unwearied Benefactor—I desire to come anew this morning into Thy presence, thanking Thee for Thy sparing mercies. Instead of making my last night's pillow a pillow of death, I am again among the living to praise Thee. O that I were enabled to live every day, and to rise every morning, as if it were to be my last, as if my next waking were to be in the morning of immortality!

Lord, how little am I influenced and impressed by the solemn records of death all around me. Friend after friend is departing

—the circle of acquaintance is narrowed. The proclamation is ever sounding with fresh emphasis in my ears, "Be ye also ready;" and yet how prone to disregard the solemn monitions! how apt to peril my preparation on the peradventures of a dying hour! Blessed God, my prayer is, that I may have my loins girded, and my lamp burning. Let me not wait to have my vessel replenished till the voice of the Bridegroom be heard, and I am summoned to meet Him. May I now so repose my every confidence in Jesus, that death may be disarmed of its sting,—that the hour which to the unwary and unwatchful is one of darkness and terror, may be to me the eve of the blessed Sabbath of eternity—the threshold and the portal of a world of endless joy.

Lord, give me to feel that "the sting of death is sin"—that, not till I get the blessed sense of all my sins cancelled and forgiven in the blood of the Surety, can I be ready for my departure. "To me to live may it be Christ,"

that so "to die" may be great and eternal "gain." Let me be enabled, by faith in death's great Conqueror, to cultivate that holy familiarity with a dying hour, that I may be enabled, when it comes, to fall sweetly "asleep in Jesus," and to hear His voice of love saying, "It is I, be not afraid."

Look in mercy on the multitudes who are content to live on, unmeet and unprepared for their great change. Awaken them to a sense of their guilt and peril. Show them their affecting need of Jesus—that time is wasting and eternity is hasting—that, "as the tree falleth, so must it lie."

I pray for the heathen who are perishing for lack of knowledge. Countenance and bless all the efforts of Thy Church to disseminate among them the gospel of the grace of God. May Thy missionary servants, who have gone with their lives in their hands to the dark places of the earth, experience a peace which the world knows not of. May they have many souls as their glory and

joy and crown at the day of Christ's appearing.

O give us all grace, in our varied stations and relations in life, to do something for Thee. Let us not bury or hide our talents; but, as members of a ransomed priesthood, may we lay our time, our opportunities, our substance, on Thine altar, and seek to "show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light." And all I ask is for Jesus' sake. Amen.

"CAUSE ME TO HEAR THY LOVING-KINDNESS IN THE MORNING, FOR IN THEE DO I TRUST."

Twenty-seventh Morning.

FOR A JOYFUL RESURRECTION.

"Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust."—Is. xxvi. 19.

Gracious God, Thou hast again dispersed the darkness of another natural night. Every rising earthly sun is bringing me nearer the gladdening day-break of immortality. O grant that, when the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised, I may be ready to listen undismayed to the summons, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet Him."

My prayer is, that I may now be made partaker of the blessedness of the first resurrection from a death of sin. As one "alive from the dead," may I rise and walk with a living Saviour "in newness of life," that thus I may

at last share also in the more glorious resurrection of His ransomed saints, when His "dead men shall live," and together with His body "they shall arise," obeying the joyous mandate of their risen Head, "Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust."

Blessed Jesus, I do rejoice to think of Thine own triumphant rising from the tomb. I rejoice to be able to visit in thought Thy vacant sepulchre, and to hear the glad tidings, "He is not here, He is risen!" "The Lord is risen!"—it is the blessed pledge and earnest of my own redemption from the power of the grave—that "because Christ lives, I shall live also." O may "my life be now hid with Christ in God, so that when Christ, who is my life, shall appear, I may also appear with Him in glory." Keep me ever in the frame I should wish to be found in when my Lord cometh. May the lamp of faith and love be ever brightly burning. May it never be mine to be awoke, by the midnight cry, to the awful consciousness, "My lamp has gone out."

May I rather be among the number of "waiting servants," who, when their Lord "cometh and knocketh," are ready to "open unto Him immediately."

Do Thou impart to all near and dear to me this day the same spiritual and eternal blessings I ask for myself. May they, too, be united to Jesus—"planted in the likeness of His death," that they may be found also "in the likeness of His resurrection." May we all seek to bear an increasingly holy resemblance in love one to another, and to our great living Head, in whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named; and if for a little while separated by death, may we, on the great day of His appearing, be reunited in bonds that shall know no dissolution.

Hasten that blessed time when our world, so long groaning and travailing in pain, shall put on her resurrection attire, and exult in the glorious liberty of Thy children. "Come, Lord Jesus: come quickly." "Why tarry the wheels of Thy chariot?"

Lord, I commend myself to Thee. Prepare me for living, prepare me for dying. Let me live *near* Thee in grace now, that I may live *with* Thee in glory everlasting. Let me be reconciled submissively to endure all that Thy sovereign wisdom and love see meet to appoint—looking forward, through the tears and sorrows of a weeping world, to that better day-spring, when "I shall behold Thy face in righteousness," and be "satisfied, when I awake, in Thy likeness." And all I ask is for the Redeemer's sake. Amen.

"CAUSE ME TO HEAR THY LOVING-KINDNESS IN THE MORNING, FOR IN THEE DO I TRUST."

Twenty-eighth Morning.

FOR THE CONQUEST OF SATAN.

"The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly."—Rom. xvi. 20.

O God, I bless Thee for the returning mercies of a new day. "I laid me down and slept; I awaked: for the Lord sustained me. I will not be afraid of ten thousands that have set themselves against me." Vouchsafe me, I beseech Thee, thy fatherly protection and blessing, that all my thoughts may be ordered by Thee, and all my plans and purposes overruled by Thee, and all my joys hallowed by Thee, and all my sorrows sanctified by Thee. Keep me near Thyself. While I seek to realize, every hour of this day, the power and subtilty of my spiritual adversaries, may I rejoice in the assurance that greater is He

that is with me than all they that can be against me—that, "though an host should encamp against me," with God on my side, "I need fear no evil."

I mourn the prevalence of sin, both in the world and in my own heart. Thy creation still groans and travails under its power. "The Prince of the power of the air still works in the children of disobedience." "The whole world lieth in the Wicked One." Often is Satan still "desiring to have me, that he might sift me as wheat"—"standing at my right hand to resist me"—to oppose my plea and damage my cause,—sending some "thorn in the flesh to buffet me"—marring my peace, disturbing my joy, and hindering and impeding my spiritual growth and advancement. But, Lord, it is my comfort to know that there is in heaven a "stronger than the strong man"—that no time can impair or diminish the comfort of the assurance, "*I* have prayed for *thee*, that thy faith fail not." When Satan assaults, blessed Jesus, I will think of

Thy continual intercession. "Thy hand is never shortened, that it cannot save."

May I ever have grace given me to "resist the devil, that he may flee from me"—to keep watchfully guarded every loophole of the heart. May I abstain from all appearance of evil, avoiding every place and every company where his unholy influences are likely to prevail. "Lead me not into temptation," and, if tempted, Lord, make a way of escape, that I may be able to bear it.

O Thou adorable Intercessor within the veil, it is my comfort to know that, in Thy season of humiliation on earth, Thou wert "not ignorant of his devices." Thou didst also, of him, "suffer, being tempted," and Thou art therefore the more able "to succor them that are tempted." I rejoice to think that, exalted on Thy mediatorial throne, Thou shalt reign until Satan and every other enemy be put under Thy feet, and until the kingdoms of this world (so long usurped by

him) shall become the "one kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ."

Heavenly Father, take this day all my beloved friends under Thy guardian care. May they dwell in the secret place of the Most High, and abide under the shadow of the Almighty. May they, too, be able to take up the triumphant challenge—"God is for us, who can be against us?" and when their earthly work and warfare is accomplished, may we all meet in that sinless world where Satan's seat no more can be found, and Satan's temptations shall no longer be felt or feared. And all that I ask is for Jesus' sake. Amen.

"CAUSE ME TO HEAR THY LOVING-KINDNESS IN THE MORNING, FOR IN THEE DO I TRUST."

Twenty-ninth Morning.

FOR THE OUTPOURING OF THE SPIRIT.

"I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh."—JOEL ii. 28.

O GOD, I desire this morning to approach with lowly reverence the footstool of Thy throne, adoring and praising Thee for the rest of the past night, and the comforts and blessings of a new day. O holy, blessed, eternal Trinity, three persons, one God, have mercy upon me, and grant me Thy benediction and love.

Most blessed Spirit of all grace, more especially would I at this time invoke Thy presence and nearness. I acknowledge, with shame and confusion of face, how often I have grieved Thee by resisting Thy gracious influences. How often hast Thou pleaded

with me by the voice of Providence, and yet I have turned a deaf ear to Thy repeated warnings and remonstrances! Thou hast spoken to me in prosperity, when the full cup demanded in return a heart full of gratitude. Thou hast spoken to me in adversity, when, by the emptied cup and the broken cistern, Thou wouldst have driven me from all earthly things, to the everlasting God Himself, as my only satisfying Portion. Thou hast spoken to me by the terrors of the law and by the tender accents of Gospel-love, and yet I have continued to "spend my money for that which is not bread, and my labor for that which satisfieth not." Long ere now I might have exhausted Thy patience. "It is of the Lord's mercies I am not consumed."

But "take not, O gracious God, Thy Holy Spirit from me." Come, Thou blessed Enlightener, Quickener, Sanctifier, and inspire this dull, cold heart. Touched as with a live coal, may the flame of a holy love to Thee be rekindled on its altar. "Return, O Holy

Dove, thou Messenger of rest," from the true ark of God. Give me grace to hate the sins which drove Thee away from this guilty breast. Breathe upon me, and say, "Peace be unto you; receive ye the Holy Ghost." Do Thou invigorate my languishing affections. May I realize my dependence on Thee for every pulsation of spiritual life. Without Thee I perish.

While I pray for this Blessed Agent in behalf of my own soul, Lord, it is my earnest prayer that He may be poured out upon all flesh—that that time may soon come, when the rain of His gracious influences shall descend on a barren church and parched world. Hasten the Pentecost of the "latter day." Earth is at present but as the prophet's "valley of dry bones." Come, Thou blessed Spirit of all grace, "breathe upon these dry bones, that they may live."

And may the same blessed and benign influences be shed on every heart that is dear to me. The Spirit of the Lord is not strait-

ened. O my Father in heaven, hast Thou not promised to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Thee? I pray that all my beloved friends may become members of that mystical body of which Jesus is the living Head, so that the oil of anointing grace, poured upon Him by the Spirit, and flowing down to the skirts of His garments, may be shared by His humblest and unworthiest members. O that each and all of our hearts may become living temples, in which the Holy Ghost dwells! May nothing that is unholy find admission there, but, "sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, the earnest of our inheritance," may we be daily and habitually living in the expectation of eternal glory. Through Jesus Christ. Amen.

"CAUSE ME TO HEAR THY LOVING-KINDNESS IN THE MORNING, FOR IN THEE DO I TRUST."

Thirtieth Morning.

FOR THE UNION OF THY PEOPLE.

"That they all may be one."—John xvii. 21.

O God, Thou eternal Fountain of all excellence and glory!—through the one "new and living way" I desire this morning to approach Thee. Powerless in my own pleadings, I look up to the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, to that "Prince who has power with God," and at all times "prevails." Guilty, I come to this guiltless Redeemer. Diseased, I come to this great Physician. Outcast, I come to Him who has promised that He will by no means "cast out." May His presence always be with me. May I know Him, and believe in Him, and rejoice in Him. May I feel that I need no

other Saviour—that He is all I require for life or for death—for time or for eternity.

I rejoice to think of the glorious multitude around Thy throne—the trophies of Thy grace—already wearing the white robe and the immortal palm. I rejoice to think of the blessed unity which pervades their glorified ranks: no note of discord disturbing their lofty harmonies—all seeing eye to eye, and heart to heart.

I lament the sad and mournful estrangement of Christian from Christian in Thy Church below—that so many, treading the same heavenly journey, with the same glorious portals in view, should be following separate and diverse footpaths—that so many brethren in the Lord, whose interchanges ought to be all love, should be looking coldly and censoriously on one another. How much ungodly jealousy, and heart-burning, and mutual recrimination, among Thy professing people! How little of the spirit which of old provoked the testimony even of heathen gain-

sayers—"See how these Christians love one another!" O thou blessed "Author of peace and lover of concord," do Thou, in Thy mercy, pour out on Thy Church on earth, a greater spirit of unity, and brotherly-kindness, and charity. Do Thou in Thy mercy heal the bleeding wounds of Thy mystical body—casting over them the mantle of love. Bring us all, blessed Jesus, as individuals and as churches, nearer Thyself, and then shall we be nearer one another. It is because of our distance from Thee, the great Sun of Righteousness, the Source of light and life and peace, that we, as wandering stars, are revolving in such devious and distant orbits. Give us to feel that we are all members of one mighty family, of which Thou art the glorious Head—that, though following diverse tracks, we are sheep of the same pasture, owning the same "Chief Shepherd"—that, though enrolled in different ranks, we are allies in the same great army, fighting under the banner of the same great Captain of salvation. O

forbid that, in these "latter days"—in these times of trouble, and rebuke, and blasphemy, when "the enemy is coming in like a flood"—we should waste our strength on petty and puny dissensions! May we be led to merge the few points in which we differ, in the many in which we can unite.

Preserve me, good Lord, this day, from all uncharitableness. May I "judge not, that I be not judged." May I have Thy favor resting upon me in all the day's duties, and Thy love softening and sanctifying all its trials. May all my beloved friends be one with me in Jesus—one now, and one in glory everlasting. Amen.

"CAUSE ME TO HEAR THY LOVING-KINDNESS IN THE MORNING, FOR IN THEE DO I TRUST."

Thirty-first Morning.

FOR THE COMING OF THY KINGDOM.

"Thy kingdom come."—Luke xi. 2.

O eternal, ever-blessed God, whose merciful kindness is new to me every morning—give me throughout this day that peace which the world cannot give. As the beams of the material sun are lighting up anew my earthly chamber, may the inner chamber of my soul be illumined by a better and brighter radiance. Jesus! Thou blessed Fountain of light, and life, and glory, do Thou disperse all the darkness of unbelief and sin. May Thy presence and love hallow all my joys, and mitigate and sanctify all my sorrows.

Ere I enter on the day's duties, do Thou anew sprinkle the lintels and door-posts of my

heart with Thine own most precious blood; may my inmost thoughts, and purposes, and desires, and affections be consecrated to that God whose property they are. May I have an increasing experience of the sweets of Thy favor, and friendship, and love. With Thee, blessed Lord, I am rich, whatever else I want; without Thee, I am poor, though I have the wealth of worlds beside. Take what Thou wilt away—but take not Thyself. Nothing can fill and satisfy the longings of my immortal nature but Thee—all worldly happiness and creature joys are poor substitutes for the inexhaustible source of all joy. Let me know what it is, amid the wreck of earthly refuges and hopes, to exult in the persuasion, "The Lord liveth, and blessed be my rock; and let the God of my salvation be exalted."

While I pray that Thy kingdom may come in my own heart, I would especially pray for its extension throughout the world. Arise, O God, and let Thine enemies be scattered. May the blessed day soon arrive when a re-

joicing and emancipated world shall own no longer habitations of darkness and horrid cruelty—when Jew and Gentile shall welcome the Prince of Peace to the Throne of Universal Empire—and "all ends of the earth shall see the salvation of God." "Come, Lord Jesus; come quickly." Let the cry soon break over Thy now burdened Church, "Let us be glad and rejoice, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready." Grant, Lord, that *I* may be in readiness to meet Thee. May my loins now be girded, and my lamp brightly burning, that, at the Bridegroom's summons, I may be able joyfully to respond, "Lo, this is my God! I have waited for Him."

Grant this day to all near and dear to me, as well as to myself, the special tokens of Thy blessing and love. Fold my beloved friends in the arms of Thy mercy. Teaching them to do Thy holy will, do Thou say *of* them and *to* them, "The same is my mother, and sister, and brother." Guide us all by Thy

counsel here. May we feel that the way in which Thou art leading us is the kindest and the best that covenant love can devise; and when our appointed time on earth is finished, do Thou receive us into everlasting habitations through Jesus Christ our Lord.

And now, to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, be ascribed, as is most due, all blessing, and honor, and glory, and praise, world without end. Amen.

"CAUSE ME TO HEAR THY LOVING-KINDNESS IN THE MORNING, FOR IN THEE DO I TRUST."

THE

NIGHT WATCHES.

"Sun of my soul! thou Saviour dear,
It is not Night if Thou be near;
Oh! may no earth-born cloud arise,
To hide Thee from Thy servant's eyes!"

"Weeping

May endure for the

NIGHT,

But Joy cometh in the

MORNING!"

Ps. cxxx. 6.

The Night Watches.

WHILE the title of this second part indicates its design as a series of evening meditations, that title may be more peculiarly suggestive of those experiences of earthly sorrow, during which this has ever proved the most blessed solace—"I have remembered THY NAME, O Lord, *in the night.*"

May every reader be able to make the assurance of the Psalmist his own—"The Lord will command His loving-kindness in the day-time, and *in the night* His song shall be with me."—(Ps. xlii. 8.)

"When the soft dews of kindly sleep
My wearied eyelids gently steep,
Be my last thought how sweet to rest
Forever on my Saviour's breast!

‘ Abide with me from morn till eve,
For without Thee I cannot live:
Abide with me when night is nigh,
For without Thee I dare not die!”

First Night.

ON THY GLORY.

"From everlasting to everlasting thou art God."—Ps. xc. 2.

My Soul! Seek to fill thyself with thoughts of the Almighty! Lose thyself in the impenetrable tracts of His Glory! "Canst thou by searching find out God?" Can the animalcule fathom the ocean, or the worm scale the skies? Can the finite grasp the Infinite—the mortal Immortality? We can do no more than stand on the brink of the shoreless sea, and cry, "O the depth!" "*From* everlasting!"—shrouded in the great and awful mystery of eternity! Before one star revolved in its sphere—before one angel moved his wing—*God was!*—the shadow of His own

infinite presence filling all space. All time to Him is but as the heaving of a breath—the beat of a pulse—the twinkling of an eye. The Eternity of bliss, which is the noblest heritage of the creature, is in its nature progressive. It admits of advance in degrees of happiness and glory. Not so with the Eternity of the Great Creator; He was as perfect before the birth of time as he will be when "time shall be no longer"—as infinitely glorious when He inhabited alone the solitudes of immensity, as He is now with the songs of angel and archangel sounding in His ears! But "who can show forth all His praise?" We can at best but lisp the alphabet of His Glory. Moses, who *saw* more of God than most, makes it still his prayer, "I beseech thee, show me Thy glory." Paul, who *knew* more of God than other men, prays still, "that I *may* know Him." "Our safest eloquence," says Hooker, "concerning Him, is our silence, when we confess without confession, that His glory is inexplicable."

And is *this* the Being to whom I can look up with sweetest confidence, and call "*My Father?*" Is it this Infinite One, whom "the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain," I can call "My God?" My soul! contemplate the medium through which it is thou canst see the glory of God, and yet live! "No man hath seen God at any time, the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." He, who dwells in light inaccessible, comes forth from the pavilion of His glory in the person of "Immanuel, God with us." In Christ, "the Image of the invisible God," the creature—ay, sinners—can gaze unconsumed on the lustres of Deity! Reader! be it thine to glorify Him. Seek thus to fulfil the great design of thy being. Let all thy words and ways, thine actions and purposes, thy crosses and losses, redound to His praise. The highest seraph can have no higher or nobler end than this—the glory of the God before whom he casts his crown. But He has a claim on thee, which he has

not on the unredeemed angel. "He gave *Himself* for thee!" This mightiest of all boons which Omnipotence *could* give, is the guarantee for the bestowment of all lesser necessary blessings, and for the withholding of all *un*necessary trials. Whilst thou art called to behold "His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father," remember its characteristic; it is not a glory to appal thee by its splendors, but to win and captivate thee by its beauties—it is "full of grace and full of truth." He is thy God in covenant. "Underneath and around thee are the everlasting arms." Thou mayest compose thyself on thy nightly pillow, with the sweet pledge of security, and say—

"I WILL BOTH LAY ME DOWN IN PEACE AND SLEEP; FOR THOU, LORD, ONLY MAKEST ME DWELL IN SAFETY!"

Second Night.

ON THY IMMUTABILITY.

"Thou art the same."—Ps. cii. 27.

What a fountain of comfort is to be found in the Immutability of God! Not one ripple can disturb the calm of His unchanging nature. Were it so, He would no longer be a perfect Being—He would undeify Himself—He would cease to be God!

"Change is our portion here!" "They shall perish," is the brief chronicle regarding everything on this side heaven. The firmament above us, the earth beneath us, the elements around us—"all these things shall be dissolved." Scenes of hallowed endearment—they are fled! Friends who sweetened our pilgrimage with their presence—they are

gone! But here is a sure and safe anchorage amid the world's heaving ocean of vicissitude—"*Thou* art the same." All is changing but the Unchanging One! The earthly scaffolding may give way, but the living Temple remains. The reed may bend to the blast, but the living Rock spurns and outlives the storm!

How blessed especially, to contemplate the unchangeableness of our Great High Priest! "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever!" True, He is, in one sense, "changed." No longer "the man of sorrows"—the homeless wanderer—He is enthroned amid the glories of heaven. Seraphs praise Him—saints adore Him; but His *Heart* knows no change! His ascension glories have not obliterated His tender human sympathies. We can think of Him receiving an outcast sinner, or stilling the Tiberias storm, or standing at the gate of Nain, or weeping tears of pity over a lost city, or tears of sympathy over a buried friend, and

write over all these, "*Thou art the same!*" The name which He bequeathed by angels to His Church until He comes again is—"*that same Jesus!*" His own Patmos title is His memorial for all time—"I *am* He that liveth!"

Believer! has He ever seemed to change towards *thee?* Art thou even now mourning over the withdrawal of that countenance whose smile is heaven? Art thou saying in the bitterness of thy spirit, "Hath the Lord forgotten to be gracious?"—The change is with thyself, not with thy God. Behind the clouds of thine own departure, the Sun of His love shines brightly as ever. "*He* fainteth not, neither is weary."

Or, it may be, thou art laboring under other trials. The hand of thy God may be heavy upon thee. The secret thought may be harbored that some tear might have been spared —that thy chastisement might have been less severe—that thy bereavement, with its dark accompaniments, might have been mit-

igated or averted. Look upwards! and take the Psalmist's antidote as thine own, "*I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High.*" Think that the same hand which was for thee nailed to the cross, is now pleading for thee on the throne, ordering and controlling every trial, and over every dark providence writing the unanswerable challenge, "He who spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" Oh! thus pillowing thy head on the Immutability of Jesus, amid the rude buffetings of a changing world, thou wilt be able, night after night, to say, till the dawn of a morning breaks on thee, which knows neither night nor vicissitude—

"I WILL BOTH LAY ME DOWN IN PEACE AND SLEEP; FOR THOU, LORD, ONLY MAKEST ME DWELL IN SAFETY!"

Third Night.

ON THY OMNIPOTENCE.

"The Lord God omnipotent reigneth."—Rev. xix. 16.

Believer! what can better support and sustain thee amid the trials of thy pilgrimage than the thought that thou hast an Omnipotent arm to lean upon? The God with whom thou hast to do is boundless in His resources. There is no crossing His designs—no thwarting His purposes—no questioning His counsels. His mandate is law—"He speaks, and it is done!" Thy need is great. From the humblest crum of providential goodness, up to the richest blessing of Divine grace, thou art hanging from moment to moment a pensioner on Jehovah's bounty; but, fear not! "I am the Almighty God!" Fi-

nite necessities can never exhaust infinite fulness—"My God shall supply all thy need!"

To Thee, O blessed Jesus! "all power has been committed in heaven and in earth." "*All power!*" He has in His hands the reins of universal empire. To "the Lion of the tribe of Judah" has been intrusted the seven-sealed roll of Providence. Whatever be the boon which the poorest, weakest, loneliest, most afflicted of His saints require, if it be really for their good, the "Wonderful Counsellor" secures it. "As a Prince, He has power with God," and must "prevail." He combines in His adorable Person all a sinner requires. A heart tender enough to love—a hand strong enough to save. The Elder Brother!—the "Mighty God!" How He delights in the exercise of that omnipotence in behalf of His own people! in *ruling over* their interests and *overruling* their trials *for* their interests! When He prays for himself, it is "*Not my will.*" When He prays for them, it is "*Father, I will!*"

May I not well take the motto which he still bears on His breastplate before the throne, as the ground of support and encouragement "in all time of tribulation"—"able to save even unto *the uttermost?*"

"The golden censer in His hand,
He offers hearts from every land,
Tied to His own by gentlest band
Of silent love.
About Him wingéd blessings stand,
In act to move."

My enemies are many—their name is Legion. Satan, the great adversary—the world, and "the world's Trinity"—the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life;—heart traitors—bosom sins. But "He that is *for* me is greater far than all that can be *against* me." He is "stronger" than the "strong man"—"Christ *the Power of God!*" "I, that speak in righteousness, *mighty* to save!"

Believer! art thou in trial, beaten down with a great fight of afflictions—like the disciples, out in a midnight of storm, buffeting a sea of

trouble? Fear not! When the tempest has done its work—when the trial has fulfilled its embassy, the voice which hushed the waters of old has only to give forth the omnipotent mandate, "Peace, be still!" and immediately there will be "a great calm." The "all power" of Jesus!—what a pillow on which to rest my aching head! disarming all my fears, and inducing thoughts of sweetest comfort, consolation, and joy.

"I WILL BOTH LAY ME DOWN IN PEACE AND SLEEP; FOR THOU, LORD, ONLY MAKEST ME DWELL IN SAFETY!"

Fourth Night.

ON THY OMNIPRESENCE.

"Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit, or whither shall I flee from Thy presence?"—Ps. cxxxix. 7.

The Ubiquity of God! How baffling to any finite comprehension! to think that above us, and around us, and within us, there is nothing but Deity—the invisible footprints of an Omniscient, Omnipresent One! "His eyes are on every place!" on rolling planets and tiny atoms, on the bright seraph and the lowly worm;—roaming in searching scrutiny through the tracts of immensity, and reading the occult and hidden page of my heart! "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do."

"God, I feel Thy presence nigh,
Everywhere o'er nature's face!

Wheresoe'er I turn my eye,
I Thy living footsteps trace!
Naught can sever me from Thee—
Everywhere Thou art with me!"

O God! shall this Thy Omnipresence appal me? Nay, in my seasons of sadness and sorrow and loneliness—when other comforts and comforters have failed—when, it may be, in the darkness and silence of some midnight hour, in vain I have sought repose—how sweet to think, "My God is here!" I am not alone. The Omniscient One, to whom the darkness and the light are both alike, is hovering over my sleepless pillow! "He that keepeth Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps!"

O thou eternal Sun! it cannot be darkness or loneliness or sadness where Thou art. There can be no night to the soul which has been cheered with Thy glorious radiance!

"Lo! *I* am with you alway!" How precious, blessed Jesus! is this Thy legacy of parting love! In the midst of Thy Church till the end of time—*ever* present, *omni*pres-

ent! The true "Pillar of cloud" by day and "fire by night," preceding and encamping by us in every step of our wilderness-journey. My soul! think of Him at this moment in the mysteriousness of His Godhead nature—and yet, with all the exquisitely tender sympathies of a glorified humanity, as present with every member of the family He has redeemed with His blood! ay, and as much present with every individual soul as if He had none other to care for, but as if *that one* engrossed all His affection and love! The Great Builder, surveying every stone and pillar of His spiritual temple—the Great Shepherd, with His eye on every sheep of His fold—the Great High Priest and Elder Brother, marking every tear-drop—noting every sorrow—listening to every prayer—knowing the peculiarities of every case; no number perplexing Him—no variety bewildering Him—able to attend to all, and overtake all, and answer all;—myriad wants drawing hourly on His treasury, and yet no diminution: that Treas-

ury, ever emptying, and yet ever filling, and always full!

Jesus! Thy perpetual and all-pervading presence turns darkness into day. I am not left unbefriended to weather the storms of life, if Thy hand be from hour to hour piloting my frail bark. Gracious andidote to every earthly sorrow, "*I have set the Lord always before me!*" Even now, as night is drawing its curtains around me, be this my closing prayer—"Blessed Saviour! abide with me, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent!" Under the overshadowing wings of Thy presence and love,

"I WILL BOTH LAY ME DOWN IN PEACE AND SLEEP; FOR THOU LORD, ONLY MAKEST ME DWELL IN SAFETY!"

Fifth Night.

ON THY WISDOM.

"His understanding is infinite."—Ps. cxlvii. 5.

How baffling often are God's dispensations! The more we attempt to fathom their mystery, the more are we driven to rest in the best earthly solution—"Thy judgments are a great deep!"

But where sense says, "All these things are against me," faith has a different verdict —"All things are working together for my good." This is the province of faith, confidingly to lean on the arm of God, and to say, "The Lord is righteous in all His ways." *We* speak of God "foreseeing!" There is no such thing. The past, present, and future are with Him all alike. He sees the end

from the beginning. We can discern but a short way, and that short way through a false and distorted medium. In a piece of earthly mechanism, we seldom can discover beauty in the incompleted structure. The mightiest works of science, while in progress, are often a chaos of confusion: it is only when finished we can admire the relation and adjustment of every part to the whole. So with the mechanism of God's moral administration. At present, how much mystery! But, when in the light of eternity we come to contemplate the completion of the mighty plan, how shall we be brought to own and exclaim, "The works of the Lord are right!"

> "But patience! there may come a time,
> When these dull ears shall scan aright
> Strains that outring earth's drowsy chime,
> As Heaven outshines the taper's light!"

Believer! are the dealings of thy God at present wearing a mysterious aspect to thee? Art thou about to enter some dark cloud, and

exclaiming, "Verily Thou art a God that hidest Thyself?" Dost thou "fear to enter the cloud?" Take courage! It will be with thee, as with the disciples; unexpected glimpses of heavenly glory,—unlooked-for tokens of the Saviour's presence and love await thee! If thy Lord lead thee into the cloud, follow Him. If He "constrain thee to get into the ship," obey Him. The cloud will burst in blessings; the ship will conduct thee (it may be over a stormy sea) to a quiet haven at last! It is only the surface of the ocean that is rough. All beneath is a deep calm, and in every threatening wave there is a "need-be!"

Oh! trust *Him*, who is emphatically "The Wisdom of God." He is thy Counsellor—combining the prescience of God with the experience and sympathy of man. He thus, pre-eminently, "knows His client's case." He is pledged to use the discipline most wisely suited for each.

"O Thou whose wisdom guides my way,
Though now it seem severe,
Forbid my unbelief to say,
'There is no wisdom here.'

"Lord! if Thou bend my spirit low,
Love only I shall see;
The very hand that strikes the blow
Was wounded once for me."

Under the blessed persuasion, that a day of disclosures is at hand, when, "in His light, I shall see light," I will trust the wisdom I cannot trace, and repeat, each night, as the shadows of evening gather around me, until the nights of earth's ignorance vanish before the breaking of an eternal day—

"I WILL BOTH LAY ME DOWN IN PEACE AND SLEEP; FOR THOU, LORD, ONLY MAKEST ME DWELL IN SAFETY!"

Sixth Night.

ON THY HOLINESS.

"Thou only art Holy."—Rev. xv. 4.

What an awful perfection is this! It denotes the burning Purity of Jehovah. It would seem to form the loftiest theme for the adorations of saints and angels. They cease not day nor night to cry, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty!" It evokes from the Church on earth her loudest strains—"Let them praise His great and terrible name, *for* it is *holy!*"

"Holy, Holy, Holy Three!
One Jehovah evermore!
Father! Son! and Spirit! we
Dust and ashes would adore.
Lightly by the world esteem'd,
From that world by Thee redeem'd,
Sing we here with glad accord,
Holy! Holy! Holy Lord!"

My soul! seek, in some feeble measure, to apprehend the nature of God's unbending hatred at sin! It is the deep, deliberate, innate opposition of His nature to moral evil, which *requires* Him to hate it, and visit it with condign punishment. It is not so much a matter of *will* as of *necessity*.

But what pleasure can there be in the contemplation of so awful a theme! The contemplation of a God "of purer eyes than to behold iniquity"—"in whose sight the heavens are not clean!"—Jesus! thy adorable atonement is the mirror in which we can gaze unappalled on this august attribute! Thy cross is to the wide universe a perpetual monument and memorial of the Holiness of God. It proclaims, as nothing else could, "Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness!" Through that cross, the holiest of all beings becomes the most gracious of all. "Now, we can love Him," says a saint who has entered on his rest, not only *although* He is holy, but *because* He is holy."

Gaze, and gaze again on that monumental column till it teaches the lesson, how vain elsewhere to look for pardon!—how delusive that dream, on which multitudes peril their eternal safety, that "God will be at last too merciful to punish!" Surely, if any less awful vindication could have sufficed,—or had it been compatible with the Divine attributes to dispense pardon in any other way, Gethsemane and Calvary, with all their awful exponents of agony, would have been spared! The Almighty victim would not have voluntarily submitted to a life of ignominy and a death of woe, if, by any simpler method, He could have "cleared the guilty." But this was impossible. If He was to "save others, Himself he *could* not save!"

Believer! let the attribute of Holiness be the superscription written on your heart and life. Abounding grace can give no sanction or encouragement to abound in sin. "His mercy," says Bishop Reynolds, "is a holy mercy which knows how to pardon sin, not to

protect it: it is a sanctuary for the penitent, not for the presumptuous."

My soul! art thou tempted to murmur under the dealings of thy God? What are the sorest of thy trials in comparison with what they *might* have been, had this Holy God left thee to know, in all the sternness of its meaning, how "Glorious He is in Holiness?" Rather marvel, considering thy sins, that thy trial has been so small—thy cross so light!

Blessed Jesus! into this sanctuary of "holy mercy" which thou hast opened for me, I will flee. I can now "give thanks at the remembrance of God's holiness!" Deriving, even from this august attribute, one of the "songs in the night"—

"I WILL BOTH LAY ME DOWN IN PEACE AND SLEEP; FOR THOU, LORD, ONLY MAKEST ME DWELL IN SAFETY!"

Seventh Night.

ON THY JUSTICE.

"Justice and judgment are the habitation of Thy throne."—Ps. lxxxix. 14.

The Justice of God is "His Holiness in exercise." Let us repair to the spot marked out as the scene of its most awful manifestation. In the depths of a by-past eternity, the summons was heard, "Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man who is my fellow!" That mysterious commission has been fulfilled! The Shepherd *has* been smitten! Myriads of condemned spirits could not have borne to God's inexorable rectitude so awful a testimony, as when, on the cross of Calvary, one lone voice sent up the wailing cry, "My God, my God, why hast *thou* forsaken me?"

My soul, rejoice! Justice, which erewhile demanded the execution of a righteous doom upon millions *lost*, can now unite with Mercy in sheathing the avenging sword, and exulting over myriads *redeemed*. The Law which brought in a whole world "guilty before God," can exult with Mercy in seeing its every requirement obeyed, its every demand fulfilled; the Lawgiver Himself "the Just and yet the Justifier;" unloosing every chain of condemnation, and pronouncing, "Not guilty!" "O Law!" says Luther, "I drown my conscience in the wounds, blood, death, resurrection, and victory of Christ."

Wondrous thought!—Justice, the very attribute which excluded the sinner, the first to throw open a door of welcome, proclaiming that infinite merit has cancelled infinite demerit—infinite holiness has covered infinite sin! While "Justice and judgment are the habitation of His throne," provision has been made whereby, in perfect consistency with every principle of His moral government,

"mercy and truth may go continually before his face."

Reader, it is well for thee often and devoutly thus to dwell on the inflexible justice of thy God. It will magnify to thee the riches of His grace, the glories of redemption, the preciousness of Jesus! If the sinner is to be saved, "judgment *must* be laid to the line, and righteousness to the plummet!" "The Sinless One must be condemned," says Lefevre, "if he that is guilty is to go free. The Blessing must bear the curse, if the cursed are to be brought into blessing. The Life must die, if the dead are to live!" "In prayer in the evening," says Henry Martyn, "I had such near and terrific views of God's judgment upon sinners in hell, that my flesh trembled for fear of them. I flew trembling to Jesus Christ, as if the flames were taking hold of me. Oh, Christ will indeed save me, or else I perish!"

My soul! take hold of that touchingly simple assurance to which Justice has appended

its seal, "Whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish!"

"Not perish!" and Justice, and a God of justice, proclaiming so great salvation—safety from the terrors of a violated law—rest from the accusations of a guilty conscience—calmness in the prospect of death—Grace here—Glory hereafter! Oh! what more can the sinner need, or the sinner's God bestow!

"I WILL BOTH LAY ME DOWN IN PEACE AND SLEEP; FOR THOU, LORD, ONLY MAKEST ME DWELL IN SAFETY!"

Eighth Night.

ON THY LOVE.

"God is Love."—1 John iv. 16.

"The only real mystery of the Bible,' says an old writer, "is a mystery of Love." "God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son!" What! that for a lost and ruined world, the Prince of life should leave the bosom on which He had been pillowed from all eternity! and expire by an ignominious death on the bitter tree! Love unutterable! unspeakable! The reflection of the skeptic of a bygone age may have formed at times the musing of better minds, "It is far too great—it is far too good to be true!" Infinite Majesty compassionating infinite weakness! The great Sun of heaven, the Fountain of un-

created light, undergoing an eclipse of darkness and blood for the sake of a taper that glimmered in nothingness in His beams. "God *so* loved the world." Man never can get further in the solution of the wondrous problem. Eternity itself will form a ladder —the saints climbing step by step in its ascending glories—but, as the prospect widens, each new altitude will elicit the same confession, "the Love of Christ, *which passeth knowledge.*"

My soul! seek to enter into the secrets of this love of thine adorable Redeemer. Before all time that love began. We have glimses of it bursting out from the recesses of a bypast eternity—"Then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him, and I was daily His delight, rejoicing alway before Him!" And "when the fulness of the time was come," though foreseen were all His untold sufferings, nothing would deter Him from pursuing His anguished path—"He set His face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem;"—nay,

as if longing for the hour of victory, He exclaimed, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished!"

Think of that love *now!*—the live coals in the censer of old—a feeble type of the burning ardor of affection still manifested by our Great High Priest within the veil, in behalf of His own people. There He bears the name of each indelibly engraven on His breastplate; "loving them at the beginning, He will love them even unto the end!" Earthly love may grow cold and changeable, or it may die. Not so the love of this "Friend of friends." It is strong as death—surviving death—nay, deathless as eternity. Listen to His own exponent of its intensity: "As the Father hath loved *me*, *so* have I loved *you!*" "You see in Him," says a pious writer, "an ocean of love without bottom, without bounds, overflowing the banks of heaven, streaming down upon this poor world to wash away the vileness of man!"

Blessed Jesus! how cold, and fitful, and transient has been my love to Thee in comparison of Thy love to me! Bring me more under its constraining influence! May this be the superscription on all my thoughts and my actions—my occupations and my time: "I am not my own—Lord, I am Thine!" How can I love Thee enough, who hast so loved me! My life shall henceforth be one thank-offering of praise for Thy redeeming mercies.

Standing this night on the shores of this illimitable ocean — surveying its length and breadth—every wave murmuring, "Peace on earth and good-will to men."—

"I WILL BOTH LAY ME DOWN IN PEACE AND SLEEP; FOR THOU, LORD, ONLY MAKEST ME DWELL IN SAFETY!"

Ninth Night.

ON THY GRACE.

'The God of all grace."—1 PET. v. 10.

"BY the Grace of God I am what I am!" This is the believer's eternal confession. Grace found him a rebel—it leaves him a son. Grace found him wandering at the gates of hell—it leaves him at the gates of heaven. Grace devised the scheme of Redemption. Justice never would. Reason never *could*. And it is Grace which carries out that scheme. No sinner would ever have sought his God but "by grace." The thickets of Eden would have proved Adam's grave had not *grace* called him out. Saul would have lived and died the haughty self-righteous persecutor had not *grace* laid him low. The thief would have continued breathing out his blasphemies had

not *grace* arrested his tongue and tuned it for glory. "Out of the knottiest timber," says Rutherford, "He can make vessels of mercy for service in the high palace of glory."

"I came, I saw, I conquered," says Toplady, "may be inscribed by the Saviour on every monument of grace. I *came* to the sinner; I *looked* upon him; and with a look of omnipotent love, I *conquered*."

My soul! thou wouldst have been this day a wandering star, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness—Christless—hopeless—portionless—had not grace invited thee, and grace constrained thee! And it is grace which, at this moment, keeps thee! Thou hast often been a Peter—forsaking thy Lord, but brought back to Him again. Why not a Demas or a Judas? "*I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not.*" Is not this thine own comment and reflection on life's retrospect?—"Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me!"

Seek to realize thy continual dependence on this grace every moment. "More grace! more grace!" would need to be thy continual cry. But the infinite supply is commensurate with the infinite need. The treasury of grace, though always emptying, is always full: the key of prayer which opens it is always at hand: and the Almighty almoner of the blessings of grace is always "waiting *to be gracious!*" The recorded promise never can be cancelled or reversed—"My grace is sufficient for thee!"

Reader! seek to dwell much on this inexhaustible theme: The grace of God is the source of minor temporal as well as of higher spiritual blessings. It accounts for the crumb of daily bread as well as for the crown of eternal glory. But even in regard to earthly mercies, never forget the *channel* of grace—"*through* Christ Jesus!" It is sweet thus to connect *every* (even the smallest and humblest) token of providential bounty with Calvary's cross—to have the common blessings of life

stamped with "the print of the nails!" It makes them doubly precious to think, "This flows from Jesus!"

> "When with dear friends sweet talk I hold,
> And all the flowers of life unfold;—
> Let not my heart within me burn,
> Except in all I Thee discern!"

Let others be contented with the uncovenanted mercies of God. Be it mine to say, as the child of grace and heir of glory—"Our *Father* which art in heaven, give us this day our daily bread!" Nay, reposing in the "all-sufficiency in all things" promised by the God of all grace,

"I WILL BOTH LAY ME DOWN IN PEACE AND SLEEP; FOR THOU, LORD, ONLY MAKEST ME DWELL IN SAFETY!"

Tenth Night.

ON THY TENDERNESS.

"He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young."—Isa. xi. 11.

How soothing, in the hour of sorrow, or bereavement, or death, to have the countenance and sympathy of a tender earthly friend! My soul! these words tell thee of one nearer, dearer, tenderer still—the Friend that never fails—a tender God! By how many endearing epithets does Jesus exhibit the tenderness of His affection to His people! Does a shepherd watch tenderly over his flock? "The Lord is my Shepherd!" Does a father exercise fondest solicitude towards his children? "I will be a Father unto you!" Does a mother's love exceed all other earthly types

of affectionate tenderness? "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you!" Is the apple of the eye the most susceptible part of the most delicate bodily organ? "He keeps them as the apple of His eye!"

"He will not break the bruised reed!" When the "Shepherd and Bishop of Souls" finds the sinner like a lost sheep, stumbling on the dark mountains, how tenderly He deals with him! There is no look of wrath—no word of upbraiding—in silent love "He lays him on His shoulders rejoicing!"

When Peter falls, He does not unnecessarily wound him. He might have repeated often and again the piercing look which brought the flood of penitential sorrow. But He gave that look *only once;* and if He reminds him again of his threefold denial, it is by thrice repeating the gentlest of questions, "Lovest thou me?"

My soul! art thou mourning over the weakness of thy faith—the coldness of thy love—thy manifold spiritual declensions? Fear

not! He knows thy frame—He will give feeble faith tender dealing—He will "carry" in His arms those that are unable to walk, and will conduct the burdened ones through a path less rough and rugged than others. When "the Lion" or "the Bear" comes, thou mayest trust the true David, the tenderest of shepherds! Art thou suffering from outward trial? Confide in the tenderness of thy God's dealings with thee. The strokes of His rod are gentle strokes—the needed discipline of a father yearning over his children the very moment He is chastising them! The gentlest earthly parent may speak a harsh word at times—it may be, *needlessly* harsh. But not so GOD. "He may seem, like Joseph to his brethren, to speak roughly; but all the while there is love in His heart!" The pruning-hook will not be used unnecessarily. It will never cut too deeply. The furnace will not burn more fiercely than is absolutely required. A *tender* God is seated by it, tempering the fury of its flames.

And what, believer, is the secret of all this tenderness? "*There is a Man upon the Throne!*" Jesus—the God-Man Mediator; combining, with all the might of Godhead, all the tenderness of spotless humanity. Is thy heart crushed with sorrow?—so was His! Are thine eyes dimmed with tears?—so were His! "Jesus wept!" Bethany's "Chief Mourner" still wears the Brother's heart in glory. Others may be unable to enter into the depths of thy trial. He can—He *does!*

With such a "tender God" caring for me, providing for me, watching my path by day, and guarding my couch by night—

"I WILL BOTH LAY ME DOWN IN PEACE AND SLEEP; FOR THOU LORD, ONLY MAKEST ME DWELL IN SAFETY!"

Eleventh Night.

ON THY PATIENCE.

"The God of Patience."—Rom. xv. 5.

There is no more wondrous subject than this—"The Patience of God!" Think of the lapse of ages during which that patience has lasted—6000 years! Think of the multitudes who have been the subjects of it—Millions on millions, in successive climes and centuries! Think of the sins which have all that time been trying and wearying that patience—their number, their heinousness—their aggravation! The world's history is a consecutive history of iniquity, a lengthened provocation of the Almighty's forbearance! The Church, like a feeble ark, tossed on a mighty ocean of unbelief; and yet the world,

with its cumberers, *still spared!* The cry of its sinful millions at this moment enter "the ears of the God of Sabaoth," and yet, "for all this, His hand of mercy is stretched out still!"

And who is this God of patience? It is the Almighty Being who could strike these millions down in a moment!—who could, by a breath, annihilate the world!—nay, who would require no positive or visible forth-putting of His omnipotence to effect this, but simply to *withdraw* His sustaining arm!

Surely, of all the examples of the Almighty's power, there is none more wondrous or amazing than "God's power over Himself." He is "slow to anger." "Judgment is His strange work." He "visits iniquity unto the third and fourth generation." He "shows mercy unto *thousands* of generations!" God bears for 1500 years, from Moses to Jesus, with Israel's unbelief; and yet, as a pious writer remarks, "He speaks of it as but a *day*:" "All day long have I stretched out my hands to a disobedient and gainsaying

people." What is the history of all this tenderness? "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord!"

My soul! How great has been God's patience towards *thee!* In thine unconverted state, when a wanderer from His fold, with what unwearied love He went after thee; notwithstanding all thy waywardness, never ceasing the pursuit "*until* He found thee!" Think of thy fainting and weariness since—thine ever-changing frames and feelings; the ebbings and the flowings in the tide of thy love, and yet, instead of surrendering thee to thine own perverse will, His language concerning thee is, "How can I give thee up?" For a lifetime, thy Saviour-God has been standing knocking at thy door; and His attitude is still the same—"Behold, *I stand!*"

"But fainter than the pole-star's ray
Before the noontide blaze of day,
Is all of love that man can know—
All that in angels' breasts can glow—

Compared, O Lord of hosts! with thine,
Unwearied! fathomless! Divine!"

How should the patience of Jesus lead me to be submissive under trial! When He has so long borne with me, shall not I "bear" with Him? When I think of *His* patience under a far heavier cross, can *I* murmur when *He murmured not?* Nay, I will check every ripening thought, and looking up, in confiding affection, to "the God of all patience,"

"I WILL BOTH LAY ME DOWN IN PEACE AND SLEEP; FOR THOU, LORD, ONLY MAKEST ME DWELL IN SAFETY!"

Twelfth Night.

ON THY FAITHFULNESS.

"Thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds?"—
Ps. xxxvi. 5.

It has been well said, that "the universe around us is a parable of grace." "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so doth the Lord compass His people!" But firmer than even these types of immutability in the kingdom of nature is the word of a covenant-keeping God in the kingdom of grace. These mountains (nature's best emblems of steadfastness) may depart, and the hills be removed, "*but*," says their almighty Maker, "*my* kindness shall not be taken from thee!"

We can look upwards to the stars of night, and see the "faithfulness" of God "estab-

lished" in the material heavens—"This day they stand as Thou ordainest!" But these are feeble types and symbols of brighter constellations in the spiritual firmament—the declarations of an unchanging God—"*Thy word* is forever settled in heaven!"

What a gracious assurance amid our own unfaithfulness, "The Lord is faithful!"—that the unfaithfulness of the believer never alters, and *can* never alter, the faithfulness of God!

My soul! anchor thyself on this rock of the Divine veracity. Take hold of that blessed parenthesis which has been to many a tossed soul as a polar star in its nights of darkness—"Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them even unto the end." He loves them in life—loves them in death—loves them *through* death—loves them *into* glory!

Art thou not at this hour a monument of God's faithfulness? Where wouldst thou have been had not the magnet of His grace

kept thee, and drawn thy fugitive affections towards Himself? From how many temptations has He rescued thee—laying hold of thee on the precipice, when about to plunge headlong down—employing sometimes *constraining*, at others *restraining* grace—making this thy brief history, "*Kept* by the power of God," and overruling all—ALL for His own glory, and thine own good?

I love to think of Thy faithfulness, O thou "*Tried* stone," "laid in Zion!" Thou wert *tried* by the Law—by Justice—by Men—by Devils, and yet Thou wert faithful! Thou hast been *tried* by Prophets and Apostles; by Martyrs and Saints; by youthful sinners, and aged sinners, and dying sinners,—and Thou hast been found faithful *by* all and *to* all; and Thou art faithful still!

My soul! never suppose, amid the faithlessness of earth's trusted friends, that thou art doomed to tread thy way in loneliness and solitude; there is more than one Emmaus journey! The "Abiding" Friend is left!

He is always the same! "He fainteth not, neither is weary!" His faithfulness is a tried faithfulness! His word is a tried word! His friendship is a tried friendship! He is always "better than His word!" He pays with usury!

"Oh! who could bear life's stormy doom,
Did not Thy word of love
Come brightly bearing through the gloom,
A peace-branch from above!
Then Sorrow, touch'd by Thee, grows bright,
With more than rapture's ray,
As darkness shows us worlds of light
We never saw by day!"

When I think that at THIS very moment the eye of that faithful Saviour-God is upon me—

"I WILL BOTH LAY ME DOWN IN PEACE AND SLEEP; FOR THOU, LORD, ONLY MAKEST ME DWELL IN SAFETY!"

Thirteenth Night.

ON THY SOVEREIGNTY.

"He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth."—DAN. iv. 35.

How blessed that elementary truth—"The Lord reigneth!" To know that there is no chance or accident with God—that He decrees the fall of a sparrow—the destruction of an atom—the annihilation of a World!

The Almighty is not like Baal, "asleep." "He that keepeth Israel" can never for a moment "slumber." "Man *pro*poses—God *dis*poses." "*Thou* didst it!" is the history of every event, past, present, and to come. His purposes none can change—His counsels none can resist!

My soul! how cheering to know that all that befalls thee and thine is thus ordered in

the eternal purpose of a Covenant God! Every minute circumstance of thy lot—appointing the bounds of thy habitation—meting out every drop in the cup of life—arranging what by thee is called its "vicissitudes"—decreeing all its trials, and at last, as the great Proprietor of life, revoking the lease of existence when its allotted term has expired!

How it would keep the mind from its guilty proneness to brood and fret over second causes, were this grand but simple truth ever realized—that all that befalls us are integral parts in a stupendous plan of wisdom—that there is no crossing or thwarting the designs and dealings of God; none can say, "What doest Thou?"—all *ought* to say, "He doeth all things well."

We dare not venture, with presumptuous gaze, to penetrate into "those secret things which belong unto the Lord our God." In all that is fitted in the consideration of this august theme of the Divine Decrees to im-

part encouragement and consolation, let us rejoice; in all that is mysterious and incomprehensible, let us with childlike reverence exclaim, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!"

The contemplation of the Sovereignty of God formed subject-matter of rejoicing to the Saviour himself in His humiliation: "Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in Thy sight!" And what supplied material for comfort and joy to an Almighty Sufferer may well dry the tears and soothe the pangs of His suffering people.

O how sinners may magnify their God by a calm submission to His will, seeing no hand but *One* in their trials—in giving or taking: "The *Lord* gave—the *Lord* taketh away!" "Who knoweth not in all these things the hand of *the Lord* hath done this?"

"Till Death the weary spirit free,
My God hath said, 'Tis good for thee,

To walk in faith, and not by sight.
Take it on trust a little while,
Soon shalt thou read the mystery right,
In the full sunshine of His smile!"

Will it not further help to the breathing of the prayer, "Thy will be done," when I think, in connection with the Sovereignty of God, of the grand end of His immutable decrees—"It is His own glory!" "*Of* Him, and *through* Him, and *to* Him, are *all things!*" What more can I desire?—"all things God's glory and my own good!—

"I WILL BOTH LAY ME DOWN IN PEACE AND SLEEP; FOR THOU, LORD, ONLY MAKEST ME DWELL IN SAFETY!"

Fourteenth Night.

ON THY PROVIDENCE.

"His Kingdom ruleth over all."—Ps. ciii. 19.

My Soul! try to see God in everything, and everything in God! Lose thine own will in His. Enter on no pursuit, engage in no plan, without Paul's prayer and condition, "If so the will of the Lord be." How it would hallow prosperity and sweeten adversity, thus, in all things, to follow like Israel the Guiding Pillar—at *His* bidding to pitch our tents—at *His* bidding to strike for march. Each providence has a voice, if we would only hear it. It is a finger-post in the journey, pointing us to "the *right* way, that we may go to the city of habitation!"

Often what a mystic volume Providence is! —its every page full of dark hieroglyphics,

to which earth can furnish no key. But faith falls back on the assurance that "the Judge of all the earth *must* do right"—the Father of all His people *cannot* do wrong. To the common observer, the stars in the nightly heavens are all confused masses, pursuing devious and erratic courses. But to the astronomer, each has its allotted and prescribed pathway, and all are preserving inviolate one universal law of harmony and order. It is faith's loftiest prerogative, patiently to wait till that day of disclosures, when page by page of the mystic book will be unravelled, and when the believer himself will endorse *every* page with, "It *is* well!"

Providences may even seem to be getting darker, merging like declining day into the shadows of twilight. But, contrary to nature, and to the Christian's expectations, "At *evening* time it shall be light!" The gathering cloud will then be seen to be fraught only with blessings, which will burst on the Believer's head.

My soul! "be still, and know that He is God!" "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him." The mysterious "wherefore" thou hast so long been waiting for will soon be revealed. The long night-watch will soon terminate—in the long looked-for, longed-for morning!

"My God! my Father! while I stray
Far from my home on life's rough way,
O teach me from my heart to say—
Thy will be done!

"Then when on earth I breathe no more
The prayer oft mix'd with tears before,
I'll sing, when on a happier shore—
Thy will be done!"

Blessed Lord! my pilgrimage path is studded thick with Ebenezers testifying to Thy faithfulness and mercy. I love to think of Thy manifold gracious interpositions in the past!—God sustaining me in trial—God supporting me in perplexity—God rescuing me when in temptation—God helping me when "vain was the help of man!" "When my

foot slipped, *Thy* mercy, O Lord, held me up!" And shall I not take all Thy goodness manifested hitherto as a pledge of faithfulness in the future? In full confidence of my God being a "rich Provider," I shall take no thought for the morrow, but repose in this covenant assurance of a covenant-keeping God! —"I will never fail thee nor forsake thee!" "Thou hast *been* my help, *therefore* in the shadow of Thy wings will I rejoice!"

"I WILL BOTH LAY ME DOWN IN PEACE AND SLEEP; FOR THOU, LORD, ONLY MAKEST ME DWELL IN SAFETY!"

Fifteenth Night.

THY WORD.

"Thy word is a lamp to my feet."—Ps. cxix. 105.

Man's word disappoints—God's word, *never!* "The Word of the Lord is tried." It has been tried by the sinner; he neglected it and perished! It has been tried by the saint; he has believed it and been saved!

What a precious legacy of God to our world! The volume of nature, much as it teaches, is dumb on the question of a sinner's acceptance. The Scriptures alone can solve the enigma, "How is God to deal with the guilty?" That question unanswered—in peace we could not live, in peace we dared not die! But glad tidings, oh! precious messenger from God, hast thou brought to a

doomed earth—"God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life!" Were there no more in this Divine communication than that *one* brief entry, the Bible would still be better to us than "thousands of gold and silver."

But it is a vast magazine and emporium of heavenly wisdom—free to all—suited for all—intended for all—offered to all;—an inexhaustible mine—the deeper you dig, the richer the ore. It has a word in season for rich and poor, young and old—for the wandering—the doubting—the sorrowing—the believing—the dying—the perishing! Reader! sit at the feet of Jesus in His Word, and with the docility of a little child, say, "Speak, Lord!" Approach it ever as if it met you with the living salutation, "I have a message from God for *thee!*" There are differences in every heart-chamber, but this key fits every door. Make it a faithful mirror, in which you see a reflection of *yourself*. The

more faithfully it is held up, the more will the sense of deficiency and defilement drive you to the atoning blood!

In all your difficulties, make it "the man of your counsel;" in all your perplexities, make it your interpreter and guide; in all your sorrows, make it your fountain of consolation; in all your temptations, make it your ultimate court of appeal. When venturing on debatable ground, let this deter thee—"What saith the Scripture?" When assailed, let this protect and defend thee—"It is written!"

Precious at all times, it is especially precious in "the dark and cloudy day." We may do without our beacon by day; but where are we without it in the midnight tempestuous sea? "I should have perished," says a sinking cast-away, "in mine affliction, but Thy *Word* hath quickened me."

"Oft as I lay me down to rest,
O may the reconciling Word
Sweetly compose my weary breast;
While on the bosom of my Lord

I sink in blissful dreams away,
And visions of eternal day !"

Be it mine to look forward to that blessed time, when the intervention of that Word, and all other means of grace, will terminate, for, in heaven "they need no candle!" Meanwhile, pillowing my head on the Word of the eternal God, and with these glorious prospects in view—

"I WILL BOTH LAY ME DOWN IN PEACE AND SLEEP; FOR THOU, LORD, ONLY MAKEST ME DWELL IN SAFETY!"

Sixteenth Night.

ON THY ORDINANCES.

"With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation."—Isa. xii. 3.

My Soul! thou art here far from thy true Home. A wilderness is thy place of sojourn; but Immanuel has provided wells in this Baca—this vale of weeping—for the refreshment of His pilgrims! In merciful adaptation to their weakness and wants, He has furnished means and instrumentality to keep alive the flame that would otherwise languish and decay. These are the golden pipes which convey the living water to the soul, fed by Christ himself from the great cistern of His own grace.

Reader! dost thou love the ordinances of God's appointment? Is the Sabbath to thee a

holy and welcome season? Dost thou gladly respond to the summons, "Go ye up into the house of the Lord?" Hast thou felt that it is *there* that "He commands the blessing, even life for evermore? Or holier ground still; do you rejoice, as the solemn season comes round, to covenant afresh with your adorable Redeemer at His own table—to record anew your unalterable attachment to Him as your Lord and Master, and commemorate His dying, ever-living love?

See that it be not the reverse of all this. Do the hours of the Sabbath, once a delight —"day of all the week the best"—hang heavily upon you? Is prayer less a privilege than it was? Is the closet less habitually frequented? Is the fire burning with a sicklier glow on the domestic altar? Have the services of the sanctuary become more matter for the head than for the heart? Be assured these are lamentable symptoms of declension —tokens of a backward and downward state. "Ye *did* run well—who did hinder you?"

Return forthwith to the deserted closet—crucify forthwith the deadening sin. Hast thou not abjured it, over and over, at a communion table? Why suffer it again to have dominion over thee—robbing thee of all thy joy—extracting all relish from ordinances—impeding grace—grieving the Spirit? Lose no time in seeking restoration of lost filial nearness. "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation." The lost Bride, in the Canticles, found her Lord beside the "Shepherds' tents;" and "*of Zion*, it shall be said, The Lord shall count, when He writeth up the people, that this man was born *there!*" Thou mayest sometimes have long to wait at the Gospel Bethesdas without any visible blessing; but, be assured, the Angel of the Covenant will, in due time, come down and show that He "is good to them that wait for Him—to the soul that seeketh Him!" "Wait, then, on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart!"

My soul! value ordinances, but do not

overvalue them. Put not ordinances in the place of the God of ordinances. They are at best but the pole to hold up the brazen serpent upon—the scaffolding by which to get up beside the Chief corner-stone. "Hold *Thou* me up, and I shall be safe!" It is not "the altar of God," but "God *Himself*," who is "the exceeding joy" of His people; and thus, even if wasting health and pining sickness should deprive me of outward ordinances, I may look upwards to that God who, though He "loves the gates of Zion," does not forget "the dwellings of Jacob," and say—

"I WILL BOTH LAY ME DOWN IN PEACE AND SLEEP; FOR THOU, LORD, ONLY MAKEST ME DWELL IN SAFETY!"

Seventeenth Night.

ON THY SPIRIT.

"Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me."—Ps. li. 11.

"It is expedient for you," said Jesus, "that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you." How momentous must be the agency of the Holy Spirit, when the adorable Redeemer represented the blank of His own departure as being more than indemnified to His Church by the presence of this Divine Paraclete!

"It is the Spirit that quickeneth." It is He who is the agent in the new birth: "Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." It is He who enables the sinner by faith to lay

hold on Jesus, and embrace His salvation: "No man can call Jesus Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." It is He who carries on the progressive work of holiness;—we are saved "through sanctification of the Spirit." It is He who creates anew the lost image of the Godhead, impresses on the soul the lineaments of the Saviour's character—"We are transformed into the same image from glory to glory by the Lord the Spirit" (marg.). It is He who illumines the page of the Divine Record—acting like a telescope to the moral vision—disclosing in the firmament of inspiration "wondrous things" contained in the law, which the natural eye cannot see. It is He who unfolds the glories of the Redeemer's work—the beauties of His person—the completeness of His sacrifice—the riches of His grace;—"He shall glorify Me; for He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." Nay, the soul of the believer becomes itself a temple of the Holy Ghost! Oh, with what holy jealousy would the child of God guard

every avenue to temptation, if this amazing truth exercised its habitual and solemnizing power over him—"The Spirit of God dwelleth within me!" How would he avoid anything and everything by which he would be likely to "grieve" this blessed Agent, "whereby he is sealed until the day of redemption!"

"Behold!" He seems to say, "I make all things new." The initial operation is His—He broods over the face of the spiritual chaos, saying, "Let there be light." The closing and consummating grace is His,—He conducts the spirit through the swellings of Jordan, till it joins with the ransomed multitude before the throne, in ascribing to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost the glories of a completed salvation.

"Take not, then, O God! thy Holy Spirit from me." In vain are the word, ordinances, sacraments, sermons, prayers, without Him. All are in themselves passive instruments; His is the omnipotent arm which wields and vanquishes.

Our adorable Redeemer—the great High Priest—was Himself anointed with the Holy Spirit. That anointing oil, poured upon the Church's living Head, "runs down to the skirts of His garment," anointing, as it flows, all His members, and those that are lowest and humblest—(nearest the skirts)—receive the most!

My soul! if this be thy position—at the feet of Jesus—the blessed influences of the Holy Spirit, streaming down upon thee in copious effusion, sanctifying thee more and more, and making thee more meet for glory—then thou mayest well say, night after night, until the day-spring of that glory burst upon thee—

'I WILL BOTH LAY ME DOWN IN PEACE AND SLEEP; FOR THOU, LORD, ONLY MAKEST ME DWELL IN SAFETY!"

Eighteenth Night.

ON THY PROMISES.

"All the promises of God in Him are Yea, and in Him Amen."—2 Cor. i. 20.

God has made a Will, or Testament, in behalf of His people! It is signed and sealed. It cannot be altered—nothing can denude us of our patrimony. The bequest is His own "exceeding great and precious promises." What a heritage!—All that the sinner requires—all that the sinner's God can give. In this testamentary deed there are no contingencies, no peradventures. The testator commences it with the sure guarantee for its every jot and tittle being fulfilled, "Verily, verily, *I* say unto you!" He endorses every promise, and every page, with a "Yea, and Amen." "God, willing more abundantly to show to

the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath!"

But who provided such a rich Promise Treasury? What is the source, where the fountain-head, from which these streams of mercy flow to the Church? "*In* HIM." Believer! *from* Jesus every promise is derived —*in* Jesus every promise centres! Pardon, peace, adoption, consolation, eternal life—all "in Him!" In *Him* you are "chosen," "called," "justified," "sanctified," "glorified." You have in possession all the blessings of present grace; you have in reversion all the happiness of coming glory: and "He is *faithful* that promised!" Your friend may deceive thee—the world *has* deceived you—He never will! Myriads in glory are there to tell how "not one thing hath failed of all that the Lord their God hath spoken." Rely on this faithfulness—He gave His Son for you. After the greater blessing, surely for subordinate ones you may trust Him.

And where do these promises beam most

brightly? Like the stars, it is in the night! In the midnight of trial—when the sun of earthly prosperity has set—when deep is calling to deep, and wave to wave; when tempted, bereaved, beaten down with "a great fight of afflictions"—the spiritual firmament, with its galaxy of Promises, will be brightest and clearest!

"Oh! who could bear life's stormy doom,
Did not Thy Word of Love
Come brightly bearing through the gloom,
A Palm-branch from above?
Then sorrow touch'd by Thee grows bright,
With more than rapture's ray;
As darkness shows us worlds of light
We never saw by day!"

But be not deceived; the night of sorrow cannot in itself give you the comfort of the Divine Promises. It may be night, and yet the stars invisible. It is only "in *Him*" these promises can be discerned in their lustre. My soul! if "out of Christ," these stars of Gospel promise shine in vain to thee; they have to the unspiritual eye no beauty or

brightness. In the midnight battle of Barak, "the stars in their courses fought against Sisera." They shone on Israel, but denied their light to the enemies of God. The guiding pillar, so lustrous to the chosen people, was a column of portentous gloom to Pharaoh's host.

But "*in Him*," as "heirs of God," ye are inheritors of "all the promises." *All* the promises! Oh! with such a pillow whereon to rest your aching head, you may well resume your nightly song—

"I WILL BOTH LAY ME DOWN IN PEACE AND SLEEP; FOR THOU, LORD, ONLY MAKEST ME DWELL IN SAFETY!"

Nineteenth Night.

ON THY WARNINGS.

"And that will by no means clear the guilty."—Exodus xxxiv. 7.

"He is faithful that *promised*." Do we bear sufficiently in mind another equal fidelity—"He is faithful" that *threatened?* My soul! ponder that solemn word, "who will *by no means* clear!" Remember *when* that word was spoken: it was in connection with a sublime apocalypse of God's majesty. It was as "the '*glory*' of the Lord" was passing before Moses! Was not this intended to show that there is an awful and inseparable connection between the Divine glory and the impossibility of God's clearing the guilty? It was at a time, moreover, when the *benignity* of God was intended to be more specially manifested.

It was when He was declared to be "the Lord, the Lord God, merciful, gracious, long-suffering, abundant in goodness." *Then* it was, we listen to the awful note of warning, that "clear the guilty" He *will* not, and *cannot!* His law requires—the honor of His throne requires—*demands*—that the guilty be "*not* cleared."

Reader! art thou still clinging to the dream of final mercy? Dost thou believe in the first part of the Divine proclamation at Sinai, and persist in presumptuous and fatal skepticism with regard to the last?—that, boundless in His resources, and infinite in His love, God *will* by *some* means "clear the guilty?"

Be not deceived! See that ye do not incur the woe of him who "striveth with his Maker!" The Lord, who "is not slack concerning His promises," can be as little slack concerning His threatenings. Time blunts the wrath of man, and chastens and subdues the turbulence of his passions; but there is no blind impulse—no vacillation in Him with

whom "a thousand years are as one day." "God's threatenings," says a writer, "are God's doings!" The law has not one breathing of mercy for you. There is not one cleft in all Mount Sinai where you can escape the vengeance of the storm! Unless you flee without delay to Him who *has* "cleared the guilty" by Himself—the Guiltless—becoming the guilt-bearer, be assured that through eternity "you will *by no means* be cleared."

My soul! art thou yet in this state of perilous estrangement? still launched on the cheerless ocean of uncertainty, leaving everything to a dying hour, the time to which nothing should be left, *but* to die! Ponder these living words of unchanging truth—"Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not escape unpunished." The golden chain of grace stretches from heaven to earth, but it can go no further—"Seek ye the Lord *while* He may be found." "*While!*" There is solemn warning in that one word! It tells thee there

is a day coming, when the Lord will be sought, but will *not* be "found."

'Time's sun is fast setting—its twilight is nigh—
Its evening is falling in cloud o'er the sky;
Its shadows are stretching in ominous gloom.
Its midnight approaches—the midnight of doom!
Then haste, sinner, haste, there is mercy for thee,
And wrath is preparing—flee, lingerer, flee!"

Reader! cast thyself this night at His footstool; implore His mercy. Rise not from thy bended knees, until, with His propitiated smile gladdening thee, and the hope of His heaven cheering thee, thou mayest (it may be for the first time in thy life) lie down with a quiet conscience and a pardoned soul, on thy nightly couch, exclaiming—

"I WILL BOTH LAY ME DOWN IN PEACE AND SLEEP; FOR THOU, LORD, ONLY MAKEST ME DWELL IN SAFETY!"

Twentieth Night.

ON THY CHASTISEMENTS.

"For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth."—Heb. xii. 6.

Chastisement!—The family badge—the family pledge—the family *privilege!*—"To you it is *given* to *suffer*." "Troubles," says a good man, "are in God's catalogue of mercies." "Afflictions," says another, "are God's hired laborers to break the clods and plough the land."

Believer! is the hand of thy God heavy upon thee? Has He been breaking thy cisterns, withering thy gourds, poisoning thy sweetest fountains of earthly bliss? Are the world's bright spots outnumbered by the dreary? Has one tear been following another in quick succession? Thou mayest have

to tell, perhaps, of a varied experience of trials. Every tender point touched—sickness, bereavement, poverty—ALL! Be still! If thou art a child of God, there is no exemption from "the household discipline." The rod is a father's; the voice that speaks may be rough, but the hand that smites is gentle. The furnace may be seven times heated, but the Refiner is seated by. His object is not to consume, but to purify. Do not misinterpret His dealings; there is mercy on the wings of "the rough wind." Our choicest fountains are fed from dark lowering clouds. All, be assured, will yet bear the stamp of love. Sense cannot discern yet "the bright light in the clouds." Aged Jacob exclaimed at first, "All these things are against me;" but at last he had a calmer and a juster verdict, "His spirit revived!" "At evening time it was light." The saint on earth can say, regarding his trials, in faith and in trust, "I *know*, O Lord, that thy judgments are right." The saint in glory can go a step far-

ther, "I *see*, O Lord, that they are so!" His losses will then be shown to be his riches. Believer! on a calm retrospect of thy heaviest afflictions—say, were they unneeded? Was this (what Augustine calls) "the severe mercy of God's discipline"—was it *too* severe? Less would not have done. Like Jonah, thou never wouldst have awoke but for the storm! He may have led thee to a Zarephath ("a place of furnaces"), but it is to show thee there "one like unto the Son of God!" When was God ever so near to thee, or thou to thy God as in the furnace-fires? When was the presence and love and sympathy of Jesus so precious? When "the Beloved" comes down from "the Mountain of Myrrh" —the "Hill of Frankincense"—to His "Garden on Earth," He can get no fragrance from some plants but by bruising them. The spices in the Temple of old were *bruised.* The gold of its candlestick was *beaten* gold! It was when the Marah-fountain of thy heart was bitter with sin, that He cast in some cross—

some trial—and "the waters were made sweet!"

My soul, be still! Thou hast in affliction one means of glorifying God, which even angels have not in a sorrowless world:—*Patience* under the rod—*Submission* to thy Heavenly Father's will! Pray not to have thine affliction removed, but for grace to bear up under it, so that thou mayest glorify God even "in the fires;" and, remembering that though "weeping endureth for a night, joy cometh in the morning," close thy tearful eyes, saying,—

"I WILL BOTH LAY ME DOWN IN PEACE AND SLEEP; FOR THOU, LORD, ONLY MAKEST ME DWELL IN SAFETY!"

Twenty-first Night.

ON THY INVITATIONS.

"Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."—JOHN vi. 37.

IN NO WISE! How broad is the door of welcome! "God," says a holy writer, "is like one on his knees, with tears in his eyes, and extreme fervor in his soul, beseeching the sinner to be saved!" He met the prodigal son half-way. Ere the ungrateful wanderer could stammer forth through penitential tears the confession of his sins, the arms of mercy were around him. The prodigal thought of no more than the menial's place: the Father had in readiness the best robe and the fatted calf! "There is no such argument," says Bishop Reynolds, "for our turning to God, as His turning to us." He has the first word

in the overtures of mercy. He refuses none —He welcomes all!—The poor—the wretched —the blind—the naked—the burdened—the heavy-laden;—the hardened sinner—the aged sinner—the daring sinner—the dying sinner —ALL are invited to the conference: "Come now, and let us reason together!" The most parched tongue that laps the streams from the smitten rock has everlasting life! "When *we* forgive, it costs us an effort; when God forgives, it is His delight." From the battlements of heaven He is calling after us: "Turn ye! turn ye! Why will ye die?" He seems to wonder if sinners have pleasure in their own death. He declares, "*I have none!*"

Reader! have you yet closed with the Gospel's free invitations? Have you gone *just as you are*—with all the raggedness of Nature's garments—standing in your own nothingness—feeling that you are insolvent—that you have "nothing to pay"—*already* a bankrupt, and the debt always increasing?

Have you taken hold of that blessed assurance, "He is able to save unto the *uttermost?*" Are you resting your eternal all on Him who has done all and suffered all for you; leaving you, "without money and without price," a free, full, unconditional offer of a great salvation? Say not your sins are too many—the crimson dye too deep. It is because you are a great sinner, and have great sins, that you need a great Saviour. "*Of whom I am the chief*," is a golden postscript to the "faithful saying."

Do not dishonor God by casting doubts on His ability or willingness. If your sins are heinous, you will be all the greater monument of grace. You may be the weakest and unworthiest of vessels; but, remember, there was a niche in the temple for great and for small—for "vessels of cups" as well as for "vessels of flagons;"—aye, and *the smallest vessel glorifies Christ!*

Arise! then, call upon thy God! We cannot say, with the king of Nineveh, "Who

can tell if God will turn?" He is "turning" *now*—importunately pleading and averring on His own immutable word, that He will "*in no wise* cast out!" "Though ye have lien among the pots, ye shall be as doves, whose wings are covered with silver, and their feathers with yellow gold!" Close without delay with these precious invitations, that, so looking up to a reconciled God and Father in heaven, you may even this night say—

"I WILL BOTH LAY ME DOWN IN PEACE AND SLEEP; FOR THOU, LORD, ONLY MAKEST ME DWELL IN SAFETY!"

Twenty-second Night.

ON THY CONSOLATIONS.

"Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God!"
—Isa. xl. 1.

God's people are often apt to be "*discouraged* because of the way." In the bitterness of their spirits, they are often apt to say, with desponding Zion, "The Lord hath forsaken me," or with the faithless prophet, "It is better for me to die than to live."

But the Christian has his *consolations* too, and they are "strong consolations." The "still small voice" mingles with the hurricane and the storm. The bush burns with fire, but the Great God is in the bush, and therefore it is indestructible! "The Lord liveth, and blessed be my rock; and let the God of my salvation be exalted!" Earthly

consolations may help to dry one tear, but another is ready to flow: God dries all. There is no want in the aching voids of the sinner's heart but He can supply.

Is it mercy to pardon? I can look up to the throne of the most high God, and see Holiness and Righteousness, and Justice and Truth, all bending in exulting harmony over my ruined soul, exclaiming, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners!"

Is it grace to help? I can look up to that same throne, and behold seated thereon a Great High Priest; nay, a mighty "Prince, having power with God, and prevailing"—"prayer without ceasing" ascending from His lips in behalf of His people. When Satan seeks "to sift" them on earth, His upholding power protects them in heaven! When temptation assails them in their earthly conflicts, the true Moses on the Mount, with hands that never "grow heavy," makes them

"more than conquerors." When trial threatens to prostrate them, He identifies Himself with the sufferers—He points to His own sorrows to show them how light the heaviest of earth's sorrows are! Even over the gloomy portals of the grave He can write, "Blessed are the dead!" He alone felt Death's substance—His people only "see the shadow." He makes it a "Valley of Achor," through which "the two spies, Faith and Hope," fetch back Eschol-pledges of the True Land of Promise!

My soul! art thou now weary, or despondingᵗ? Is some cross heavy on thee—some trial oppressing thee—some thorn in the flesh sorely lacerating thee? Be still! He will make His "grace sufficient for thee." If He has allured thee into the wilderness, it is that He may speak comfortably unto thee. He has an antidote for every bosom—a balm for every heart—a comfort for every pang—a solace for every tear. "In the multitude

of my thoughts within me, Thy comforts delight my soul!"

"Tis my happiness below
Not to live without the cross,
But the Saviour's power to know,
Sanctifying every loss.

"Trials must and will befall;
But with humble faith to see
Love inscribed upon them all,—
This is happiness to me!

"Trials make the promise sweet,
Trials give new life to prayer,
Trials bring me to His feet,
Lay me low, and keep me there!"

"I WILL BOTH LAY ME DOWN IN PEACE AND SLEEP; FOR THOU, LORD, ONLY MAKEST ME DWELL IN SAFETY!"

Twenty-third Night.

ON THY PATHS.

'All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep His covenant and His testimonies."—Ps. xxv. 10.

"ALL THE PATHS!" It is no small effort of faith to say so,—when blessings are blown upon and schemes crossed, and fellow-pilgrims (it may be beloved helpmeets in our spiritual joys) mysteriously removed,—to say, "All—ALL is mercy!—All—ALL is well!"

But they are "the paths of *the Lord*"—His choosing; and be assured He will "lead His people by a right way." It may not be the way of their own selecting. It may be the very last they would have chosen. But when He leadeth His sheep, "*He goeth before them!*" The Shepherd stakes off our

pasture-ground. He guides "the footsteps of the flock." He will lead them by no rougher way than He sees needful. Does a father give his child his own way? If he did, it would be his ruin. Will God surrender us to our own truant wills, which are bent on nothing so much as wandering farthest from the Shepherd? He knows us better—He *loves us better!*

My soul! it is the loftiest triumph and prerogative of faith to have no way—no path of thine own—but with childlike simplicity and reliance to say, "Teach me *Thy* paths!" "Undertake *Thou* for me!" Lead me *howsoever* and *wheresoever* Thou pleasest. Let it be through the darkest, loneliest, thorniest way—only let it bring me nearer *Thyself.*

"O tell me, Thou life and delight of my soul,
Where the flock of Thy pasture are feeding;
I seek Thy protection, I need Thy control;
I would go where my Shepherd is leading.
O tell me the place where Thy flock are at rest,
Where the noon-tide will find them reposing!
The tempest now rages, my soul is distrest,
And the pathway of peace I am losing!"

O that we could keep our eye not so much on the path, as on the bright wicket-gate which terminates it! When standing at that luminous portal, we shall trace, with adoring wonder, the way in which our God has led us, discerning the "need-be" of every tear-drop; —and to the question, "Is it well?" to which often on earth we gave an evasive answer, ready with an unhesitating, "It *is* well!" What a light will then be flashed on these three oft mysterious words, "God is Love!" Then, at least, shall we be able to add the joyful comment—"We have known and *believed* the love which God hath to us!"

Meanwhile, my soul! if thou art treading a path of sorrow, consider, as an encouragement, that thy Lord and Master trod the same before thee. Behold! as He toils on His blood-stained journey, how submission to the Divine will forms the secret of His support. "Even so, Father!" "Not my will, but Thine be done!" The True David was strengthened with what sustained His typical

ancestor in a dark and trying hour: "O Lord, thou art *My God!*" Believer! if it be *thy* God in covenant who is leading thee, what more canst thou require? "His ways are verity and judgment:" "He will guide thee, while thou livest, by His counsel, and afterward receive thee into His glory!" My God! if such be the design of thy dealings and discipline,—

"I WILL BOTH LAY ME DOWN IN PEACE AND SLEEP; FOR THOU, LORD, ONLY MAKEST ME DWELL IN SAFETY!"

Twenty-fourth Night.

ON THY SECRET.

"The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His covenant."—Ps. xxv. 14.

My Soul! thy God has some mighty Secret to confide to thee! What is this, which (a mystery to the world) is to be conveyed in whispers into the ears of His people? "*He will show them His Covenant!*"

Listen this night to this blessed "secret." Thou hast pondered it oft before. But its wonders never diminish by repetition.

The *Author* of it is God—the Eternal Father! He framed its articles before the foundation of the world. It is an inverted order of truth that would represent the atonement as the cause of God's love: that love was rather the originating cause of the atonement

—"God so loved the world!" How runs the Covenant-Charter?—"All things are yours! Ye are Christ's!" "Christ is *God's!*" The initiative—the first overture of covenant mercy—was with Him. It was the insulted Sovereign who first dreamt of clemency towards the rebels—the injured Father who first thought of His ungrateful children! Wondrous secret!—that from all eternity the Heart of God was to us *all Love!*

Think of the *Surety* of the Covenant! It was the adorable Son of the Father! He voluntarily closed with the Covenant stipulations: "Lo, I come! I delight to do Thy will, O my God!" He ceased not until, all the terms being fulfilled, He could claim His stipulated reward: "I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest *Me* to do!" And still He lives, and reigns, and intercedes under the blessed title of "Mediator of the Everlasting Covenant!"

Think of the Almighty dispenser of the

blessings of the Covenant.—It is the Spirit of all Grace—the third person in the ever-blessed, co-equal Trinity! Think of the *Heirs* of the Covenant. They are all who, by simple faith, are willing to appropriate its inestimable blessings! Think of the *Security* of the Covenant. There is nothing but contingency in other things—all is certainty here: "I will be unto you a God, and ye shall be to me a people!" Sure! it has the rock of Christ's Deity to rest upon, and a Triune God pledged to make good all its provisions—"My covenant will I not break, nor alter the word that has gone out of my mouth!" Think of the *Perpetuity* of the Covenant: "I will betroth thee unto me *forever!*" Think of the rich *Inheritance* of the Covenant. Oh! here is the mighty secret of unfathomable love: "If children, then Heirs —*Heirs of God.*" "Heirs of God!"—all within the compass of Omnipotence to bestow! "God," says Bishop Beveridge, "thus speaks, I AM that I AM!—He puts His hand

to a blank that His people may write under it what they please that is for their good :— He simply saying, in the general 'I *AM!*' "

My soul! art thou an heir of God? Canst thou look upwards to the throne of that Great "*I Am*," and say "*My God?*" Happier words—a more glorious assurance—cannot thrill on an archangel's tongue! With such a Portion, surely I am independent of all others. Let that amazing "secret" form the last thought of this day; and, as the Almighty is even now whispering it in my ears, I may close my eyes, repeating—

"I WILL BOTH LAY ME DOWN IN PEACE AND SLEEP; FOR THOU, LORD, ONLY MAKEST ME DWELL IN SAFETY!"

Twenty-fifth Night.

ON THY NAME.

"The name of the Lord is a strong Tower; the Righteous runneth into it, and is safe."—Prov. xviii. 10.

Strong indeed! "Salvation is for walls and for bulwarks." Every attribute of Godhead is such a tower—every perfection such a Bulwark—all combined to insure the Believer's everlasting security.

My soul! "walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark well her bulwarks, consider her palaces!" Mark the strong Tower of *Omnipotence!* It proclaims that Almightiness is on thy side—that there is *ONE with* thee and *for* thee, boundless in His resources, greater far than all that can be against thee!

Mark the strong tower of *Unchangeable-*

ness! All earthly fabrics are tottering and crumbling around thee—the dearest of all thine earthly refuges has written on it the doom of the dust. But, sheltered here, thou canst gaze unawed on all the fitful changes of life, and exult in an unchanging God!

Mark the strong Tower of *Wisdom!* When dealings are dark, and chastisements mysterious, dost thou know what it is to retire within this fortress, and to be reminded that all, *all* that befalls thee, is the planning of unerring rectitude and faithfulness?—to see inscribed on the chamber-walls, "The only Wise God!"

Mark the strong Tower of *Love!* When the hurricane has been fierce—thy heart breaking with new trials—the past dark—the future a dreary waste—no lull in the storm—no light in the clouds—oh! is it no comfort to thee to retire into this most hallowed of bulwarks, and read the living motto—emblazoned on its every turret—"God is love!"

My soul! art thou safe in this impregnable

fortress? Hast thou entered *within* the gate? Remember, it is not to be "*near*" the city, but *in* it. Not to know *about* Christ, but to "win Him, and be found *in* Him!" One footstep without, and the Avenger of blood can cut thee down!

"Turn, then, to the stronghold as a "prisoner of hope!" Once, these were colossal walls to exclude. Now, they are unassailable barriers to protect—a citadel where His saints are "kept" by the power of God. Every portal is open; and the God of Mercy issues the gracious proclamation,—"Come, my people, enter into thy chambers!"

How safe—how happy here! "If there be tossing and doubting, it is the heaving of a ship at anchor—not the dashing on the rocks."—(Evans.) In God! "There is, in this," says President Edwards, speaking of the same blessed truth, "secured to me, as it were, a calm, sweet cast, or appearance, of glory in almost everything." We can hear, amid the surges of life, a voice high above

the storm—the Name of the Lord—"It is *I!*" "It is *I!*" remarks Bishop Hall, "were as much as a hundred names. It is I!—I! your Lord and Master. I! the Commander of winds and waters. I! the Sovereign Lord of Heaven and Earth. *I!* the God of Spirits. Let Heaven be but as one Scroll, and let it be written all over with titles—they cannot express more than—It is I! Oh, sweet and seasonable word of a gracious Saviour!—able to calm all tempests—able to revive all hearts—say but so to my Soul, and I am safe!"

"I WILL BOTH LAY ME DOWN IN PEACE AND SLEEP; FOR THOU, LORD, ONLY MAKEST ME DWELL IN SAFETY!"

Twenty-sixth Night.

ON THY FAVOR.

"In Thy favor is life"—Ps. xxx. 5.

How anxious are we to stand well with our fellow-men, and secure *their* favor! are we equally so to stand well with God? The favor of man, what is it?—A passing breath, which a moment may alienate, a look forfeit, and which, at best, a few brief years will forever terminate. But the favor of God—how ennobling, constant, and enduring! In possession of that favor, we are independent alike of what the world gives and withholds. *With* it, we are rich, whatever else we want. *Without* it, we are poor, though we have the wealth of worlds beside. Bereft of Him, we can truly say with aged Jacob, "I *am* be-

reaved." Nothing can compensate for *His* loss, but *He* can compensate for the loss of everything!

> "Thou art, O God, the life and light
> Of all this wondrous world we see;
> Its glow by day, its smile by night,
> Are but reflections caught from Thee!
> Where'er we turn, Thy glories shine,
> And all things fair and bright are Thine."

My soul! art thou living a stranger to this favor, under the cheerless sense of alienation from God? Sin uncancelled—peace unpurchased—all uncertainty about the question of thine eternity? Who need ask, living thus, if thou art satisfied, or happy? *Satisfied!* Impossible—*nothing* can satisfy thine infinite capacities but the infinite God. Nothing can fill up the aching voids of thine immortal being but Him "who only hath immortality." *Happy!* impossible, too. There can be no happiness with sin unforgiven—the conscience unappeased—imperishable interests hanging overhead unsettled and unadjusted—death, and judgment, and eternity, all unprovided

for! Living at this "dying rate," peace must be a stranger to your bosom!

Seek to make up your peace with God. Covet His life-giving favor. What a blessed fountain of unsullied joy has that soul which can look up to Heaven and say, "God is mine!" That word—that *thought*—wipes away every tear-drop, "My Father!" What though the perishable streams be dried, if thou art driven to learn the truth, "All my well-springs are in *Thee?*" He may empty thy cistern, but the Fountainhead remains. Job was the sorest of sufferers, but he could bear patiently to be bereft of all, save *One*—"O that I knew where I might find *Him!*" "Go," said Chrysostom, exulting in this favor of the King of kings, when an earthly princess tried to shake his spirit—"Go, tell her that I fear nothing but sin." Blessed state of conscious security!

"If Thou art mine, Eternal God!
Let fraud or malice, storm or flood,
Bear all besides away:

The soul's best treasure lies too deep
For spoiler's arm or fortune's sweep,
Or time's more sure decay!

Death, that all meaner bliss destroys,
Robs not the spirit of its joys;
And if his stroke can sever
The fleshly seal, 'tis but to bring
The living waters from their spring,
And bid them gush forever."

The same mighty consolation which supported Jesus in His season of humiliation, forms the solace and rejoicing of His true people—"Because HE is on my right hand, I shall not be moved." Blessed Jesus! do Thou encompass me this night with Thy favor as with a shield, and then

"I WILL BOTH LAY ME DOWN IN PEACE AND SLEEP; FOR THOU, LORD, ONLY MAKEST ME DWELL IN SAFETY!"

Twenty-seventh Night.

ON THY JEWELS.

'They shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels."—Mal. iii. 17.

"My Jewels!" (*marg.* My peculiar treasure.) Of what favored created beings does Jehovah thus speak? Is it of seraphs?—of angels? Methinks at such a title even *they* would take the dust of abasement, and veiling their faces, cry, "Unclean! unclean!" But marvel of marvels!—It is redeemed sinners of the earth—the fallen children of men, once rude, unshapely stones, lying in "the horrible pit and the miry clay," amid the rubbish of corruption, who are thus sought out by grace, purchased by love, destined through eternity to be set as *jewels* in the crown of the eternal God!

"The Lord's portion is His people!" There is a surpassing revelation of love here! Great, unspeakably great, is the privilege of the Believer, to be able to look up to the everlasting Jehovah and say, "Thou art *my* portion, O Lord!" But what is this in comparison with the response of Omnipotence to the child of dust, "*Thou art Mine!*"

My soul! hast thou learnt to lisp thy part in this wondrous interchange of covenant-love, "My beloved is Mine, and I am His?" What an array of wondrous titles belong to the saints of God, and given, too, by God himself in His own Word. "He calls them Sons as often as sinners!" Brethren! Princes! Friends! Heirs! Jewels! Portions! "*Mine!*"

And *when* is the time when they become thus dear to Him? Sinner! when thou didst weep at the cross of Jesus, and joined thyself in covenant with God, thou becamest His *Jewel!* Nay, "He has loved thee with an everlasting love!" True, thou art not yet set in His crown; thou art yet undergoing the

process of polishing. Affliction is preparing thee; trial is needed to remove all the roughness and inequalities of nature, and make thee meet for thy Master's use. But, blessed thought? "He that hath *wrought* us [literally, *chiselled* or *polished* us] for the self-same thing is *God!*" Yes, God himself, the possessor, who prized that earthly jewel so much as to give in exchange for it Heaven's "Pearl of great price!" *He* has the polishing in His own hand. He will not deal too rashly or roughly!

And where, meanwhile, is the casket in which these Jewels are kept till the coronation-day arrives, when the crown of His Church triumphant (every saint a gem) will be placed on the head of Jesus? It is He, their Purchaser, their Proprietor, who preserves them. They are "kept by the Power of God." Our great High Priest, the true Aaron, has them set in His breastplate; He bears them on His heart on His every approach to the throne. They are the precious

stones set in gold upon the ephod, and though the sins of His people, and the designs of Satan, combine in doing what they can to erase and destroy them, He declares that none shall ever pluck them out of His hand or from His heart!

A jewel in Immanuel's crown!—Not only raised from the dunghill to be set among princes, but to gem through eternity the forehead that for me was once wreathed with thorns! Shall I—*can* I—murmur at any way my Saviour sees meet to polish and prepare me for such an honor as this?

Let me sink down on my nightly pillow overpowered with the thought; and as I hear my covenant God whispering in my ear the astounding accents, "*Thou art Mine!*" I may well reply,

"I WILL BOTH LAY ME DOWN IN PEACE AND SLEEP; FOR THOU, LORD, ONLY MAKEST ME DWELL IN SAFETY!"

Twenty-eighth Night.

ON THY JUDGMENT-SEAT.

"We must all appear before the Judgment-seat of Christ!"—2 Cor. v. 10.

"All!" There is no eluding that searching scrutiny—"Every eye shall see Him!" My soul! if safe in the covenant, there is to thee no terror in that coming reckoning. The *judicial* dealing between thyself and thy God is already past. Thou art already acquitted. The moment thou didst cast thyself at the cross of thy dear Lord, the sentence of "Not Guilty" was pronounced upon thee; and "it is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth?" But this sentence will be ratified and openly proclaimed before an assembled world. On that great day of disclosures God will avenge His own elect.

All the calumnies and aspersions heaped on their character will be wiped away. And in presence of devils, and angels, and men, the approving sentence will go forth from the lips of the omniscient One, "Enter ye into the joy of your Lord."

And who is to be thy Judge? Who is to be enthroned on that tribunal of unerring rectitude, before whom every knee is to bow, and every heart is to be laid open? "He hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness *by that Man* whom He hath ordained!" "*That Man!*" Oh! it is no stranger! It is He who died for thee; who is now interceding for thee; who will then stand on that latter day on the earth to espouse thy cause, vindicate thine integrity, and utter the challenge to every reclaiming adversary, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?"

My soul! seek to know this God-Man Mediator on a throne of grace, ere you meet Him on a throne of judgment! Seek to have

your name now enrolled in this Book of Life, that you may hear it then confessed before His "Father and the holy angels."

What an incentive to increased aspirations after holiness and higher spiritual attainments, to remember that the awards of that day and of eternity will be determined by the transactions of time! It is a grand Bible principle, that, though justified by faith, we shall be judged by works. Nay more, while from first to last, Jesus, and Jesus alone, is the meritorious cause of salvation, yet the works flowing from faith *in* Him and love *to* Him will regulate the degree of future bliss; whether we shall be among the "greatest" or "the least in the kingdom"—whether we shall occupy the outskirts of glory, or revolve in orbits around the throne in the blaze of God's immediate presence!

Reader! were that trumpet-blast now to break on thine ear, wouldst thou be prepared with the welcome response, "Even so, come?" Seek to be living in this habitual state of holy

preparedness, that even the midnight cry would not take thee by surprise; that the summons which will prove so startling to a slumbering world, would be to thee the herald of glory—"He cometh, He cometh to judge the earth!"

"Never again your loins untie,
Nor let your torches waste and die,
Till, when the shadows thickest fall,
Ye hear your Master's midnight call!"

O the blessedness of being able, in sweet confidence in the Saviour's second coming, to compose myself to rest night after night, and say, "Even though the trumpet of judgment should break upon my ears,

"I WILL BOTH LAY ME DOWN IN PEACE AND SLEEP; FOR THOU, LORD, ONLY MAKEST ME DWELL IN SAFETY!"

Twenty-ninth Night.

ON THY BANQUETING-HOUSE.

"He brought me to the Banqueting-house."—Cant. ii. 4.

"He brought me!"—all of grace! *He* justifies, *He* glorifies. The top-stone is brought forth, the banqueting-house is entered, with shoutings, saying, "Grace, grace unto it!" My soul! contemplate the journey ended, the course finished, the victory won! Seated at the supper-table of the Lamb in glory, guest talking to guest with bounding hearts, recounting their Lord's dealings on earth—the watchword circulating from tongue to tongue, "He hath done all things well!" Angels and archangels, too, will be participants in that banquet of glory, and bright seraphs, who never knew what it was to have a heart

of sin or to shed a tear of sorrow. But for this reason, there will be one element of joy peculiar to the redeemed, into which the other unfallen guests cannot enter—the "*joy of contrast.*" How will the present "great tribulation" augment the bliss of a world at once sinless and sorrowless! How will earth's woe-worn cheek, and sin-stricken spirit, and tear-dimmed eye, enhance the glories of that perfect state where there is not the type or symbol of sadness, not the solitary trace of one lingering tear-drop! Then will be realized that sweet paradox, "They rest," "They rest not!" "*The rest without a rest!*" "They *rest!*"—the eternal pause and cessation from all the feverish disquietudes of this world's sins and sorrows, all that would disturb the rapture of a holy repose, and yet the *restless* activity of holiness—the Divine energy of beings whose grand element of happiness is employment in the service and executing the will of God. In this "they cease not day nor night." It is sublimely said of

the God before whom they hymn their anthems and cast their crowns, "He inhabiteth the praises of eternity!"

My soul! seek often to ponder, in the midst of thy days of sadness, the joys of that eternal banqueting-house. "Ye shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more!" One moment at that table—one crumb of the heavenly manna—one draught from the river of life, and all the bitter experiences of the valley of tears will be obliterated and forgotten! Look upwards even now, and behold thy dear Lord preparing for thee this glorious "feast of fat things." "I go to prepare a place for you." "I will come again, and receive you unto myself!"—He has Himself entered the Banqueting-house as the earnest and forerunner of the coming Guests. He, the first Sheaf of the mighty harvest, has been waved before God in the temple of the New Jerusalem, as a pledge of the immortal sheaves still to be gathered into the heavenly garner. The invitation is issued, "Come, for

all things are ready! the oxen and the fatlings are killed!" My soul! prepare for the meeting; suitably attire thyself for such a glorious banquet. Put on thy beautiful garments—that righteousness of Jesus, without which thou canst not be *accepted*—that holiness of heart, without which thou canst not be an *acceptable* guest. Soon shall the little hour of life's unquiet dream be over; and then, O the glorious surprise of being ushered into that banqueting-table—to know *forever* the blessedness of those "who are called unto the marriage-supper of the Lamb!"

With the prospect of *such* joys awaiting me in the morning of immortality, with the dark nights of death before me, and the grave my couch, I shall be able to say even of *its* lonely chamber—

"I WILL BOTH LAY ME DOWN IN PEACE AND SLEEP; FOR THOU, LORD, ONLY MAKEST ME DWELL IN SAFETY!"

Thirtieth Night.

ON THY PRESENCE.

"In Thy presence there is fulness of joy."—Ps. xvi. 12.

Even in this world, where there is *much* of God, how sweet to the Christian is the sense of His presence, and friendship, and love! What will it be in that world, where it is *all* of God? The foretaste is blessed—what must be the *fruition!* The rays of the Divine glory are gladdening—what must be the full blaze of that Sun itself!

My soul! dost thou often delight to pause in thy journey?—does faith love to ascend its Pisgah-Mount and get a prospect of this Land of Promise? What is the grand feature and element which swallows up all the circumstantials in thy future bliss? Let Patriarchs, Pro-

phets, and Apostles, answer—It is "*Thy* Presence." "In my flesh, I shall see *God!*" says one. "I shall be satisfied," says another, "when I awake, with Thy likeness." "They shall see His face," says a third. Amid all the glowing visions of a coming Heaven vouchsafed to John in Patmos, there is One all-glorious object that has ever a peerless and distinctive pre-eminence—God himself. There is no candle—Why? "For the *Lord God* giveth them light?" There is no temple—Why? "For the Lord God and the Lamb are the temple thereof!" The Saints dwell in holy brotherhood; but what is the mighty bond of their union—their "chiefest joy?"—"He that sitteth on the Throne dwells among them!" They have no longer the intervention of ordinances and means—Why? Because "the Lamb that is in the midst of the Throne shall feed them, and lead them to living fountains of waters!" They no longer draw on the storehouse of the Promises—And why? Because "God himself shall wipe

away all tears from their eyes!" "No napkin," says a holy man, "but His own immediate hand, shall wipe my sinful face!"

My soul! here is the true "*Peniel*"—where you will "see God face to face!" Here is the true "*Mahanaim*"—where "the Angels of God meet you!" Here is the true Communion of Saints—"The glorious fellowship of the Prophets—the goodly fellowship of the Apostles—the noble army of Martyrs!" Yet all these latter will be subservient and subordinate to the first—the vision and fruition of *God!* Even the recognition of the death-divided (that sweet element in the Believer's prospect of bliss) will pale in comparison into a taper-light before this "Glory that excelleth!"

Reader! art thou among these "pure in heart," who are to "see God?" Remember the Bible's solemn interdict—"Without holiness no man shall see the Lord!" Remember its solemn admonition—"And every man that hath this hope in Him, purifieth himself even

as He is pure!" To "see God!" O what preparation needed for so august a contemplation! Infinite unworthiness and nothingness to stand in the presence of Infinite Majesty, Purity, and Glory!

Can I wonder at the much discipline required ere I can be thus "presented *faultless* before the presence *of His glory?*" How will these needed furnace-fires be dimmed into nothing when viewed from the Sapphire throne! "Heart and flesh may be fainting and failing;" but, remembering that that same God is now "the strength of my heart," who is to be my "portion forever," I may joyfully say—

"I WILL BOTH LAY ME DOWN IN PEACE AND SLEEP; FOR THOU, LORD, ONLY MAKEST ME DWELL IN SAFETY!"

Thirty-first Night.

ON THY CLOSING CALL.

"Now is the accepted time: behold! now is the day of salvation."—2 Cor. vi. 2.

Reader! how stands it with thee? Is the question of thy eternity finally and forever adjusted? Art thou at peace with God? Canst thou say with Paul, in the prospect of death, "I am now ready?" Hast thou been led to feel the infinite peril of postponement and procrastination, and responded to the appeal—"Behold! *Now!*" Ah! how many have found, when the imagined hour of death-bed preparation had come, that the tear of penitence was too late to be shed, and the prayer of mercy too late to be uttered!

Let there be plain dealing between thy con-

science and thy God. Seek not to escape from the pressing urgency of the question. Thou mayest dismiss it now, but there is a day coming when thou durst not! Let it not merge in vague generalities—let it be realized as matter of personal concernment—of infinite moment to thyself—"Am I saved, or am I not saved?—am I prepared, or am I unprepared, to meet my God?" Thou mayest have, perhaps, an honest purpose of giving it some future entertainment at another and "more convenient season." Do we ever read of Felix's "*more*" convenient season? It were better not to risk to the experiment of a dying hour the solution of the problem—"Is it safe to delay?" Take it on trust, that it is a hard matter—a conference about the soul on the brink of eternity! Remember, "God's Spirit will not always strive!" All His other attributes are infinite, but His patience and forbearance have their "bounds and limits." The invitation which is thine to-day may be withdrawn to-morrow. The axe may be even

now laid at the root of the tree, and the sentence on the wing, "Cut it down!"

How awful, if it really be that thou art yet living in this state of estrangement and guilt! What a surrender of present peace! What a forfeiture of eternal joy!

Haste thee! flee for thy life, lest thou be consumed! Thy immortality is no trifle! "The night is far spent!" Who can tell, *how* far? It may be now or never with thee! Thou art about once more to lie down on thy nightly pillow. What if thy awaking to-morrow were to be "in outer darkness?"

But, take courage—That night is *not too far* spent! Close this last of the "Night Watches," by fleeing, without delay, to Jesus—the Sinner's Saviour and the Sinner's Friend. It was on the *last* watch of the night He came of old to His tempest-tossed disciples. Like them, receive Him now into thy Soul! and have all thy guilty fears calmed by His omnipotent "Peace, be still!" Are there not ominous signs all around as if the

world's last and closing "night-watch" had set in? The billows are heaving high. We hear the footsteps on the waters! Amid the fitful moanings of the blast—the watchword is heard—of joy to some, of terror to others—"*Maran-atha!*" "The Lord is coming!"

Reader! art thou ready? Is the joyous response on thy tongue—"Come, Lord Jesus; come quickly?" If this night were indeed *thy very last*, and the thunders of judgment were to break upon thee ere daybreak—wouldst thou be able, in the assurance of an eternal dawn, to say—

"I WILL BOTH LAY ME DOWN IN PEACE AND SLEEP; FOR THOU, LORD, ONLY MAKEST ME DWELL IN SAFETY!"

THE END.

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